

Roanoke County

Emergency Communications Center



2021 Annual Report



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Manager's Introduction

It is my pleasure to present the Roanoke County Emergency Communications Center (ECC) 2021 Annual Report. This year's annual report covers the fiscal year of July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021.

While this past year has been my first year as the Emergency Communications Manager (ECM), it is not my first year with the County. I previously worked in the ECC from 1999-2005, when I left to work at Norfolk Southern Railroad in their ECC. After several years, when the railroad moved operations out of state, I was hired at the City of Salem Police Department as their 911 Center Manager (2015-2020) and I returned here to Roanoke County in January 2021 when the current ECM Aleta Coleman (and my original trainer here back in 1999) retired with 30+ years of service with Roanoke County ECC.



The women and men of our department serve as first responders together with Emergency Medical Service, Fire, and Law Enforcement personnel to save lives, protect property and stop crime. I anticipate that you will find the included facts regarding our department informative and inclusive.

In the last year, we have focused on our recruitment efforts. We hired thirteen (13) Communications Officers (COs), providing them with structured classroom and on-the-job training modules. Of those, six (6) employees were released from Roanoke County probation. Five employees were promoted to Communications Officer II positions.

During the first quarter, several of our software programs received updates. We held DCJS Basic Dispatch Academy 21-01. Talks started between Roanoke County and Salem for the installation of a shared hardware platform for the software each locality utilizes to answer 9-1-1 calls.

During the second quarter, we successfully submitted our migration proposal to the Virginia Department of Emergency Management for our Next Generation 9-1-1 project. We successfully completed our web-based assessment with the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). As well as continued to work through the challenges posed by "COVID-19" pandemic.

During the third quarter, we hired a new ECM, promoted a new Communications Team Supervisor and promoted two Communications Training Officers. And DCJS Basic Dispatch Academy 21-01 was held.

During the fourth quarter, additional changes were made due to COVID-19.

As staffing increases, my focus will shift to retention.

Rebekah Craft

Emergency Communications Manager

Department Overview

VALUES

We affirm the importance of individual empowerment. We strive to create a just, safe, and welcoming environment for all, while continuously improving our quality services.

Compassion

Respect the dignity of all persons

Professionalism

Engage in behavior reflective of the integrity of the profession

Pride

Demonstrate care and ability as public safety employees

Teamwork

Strive to cultivate effective public and private sector working relationships

Excellence

Endeavor to meet or exceed national public safety standards

GOALS

Service

We build confidence, integrity, and impartiality by serving our community in a professional, honest and compassionate manner.

Safety

We improve safety for our community, organizations we serve and our own employees.

Relations

We form working relationship with multiple organizations within Roanoke County to better serve our citizens.

Employee Care

We solicit ideas from each employee to maintain a healthy working environment. Teamwork and timeliness are essential to our success. We support employees and our community.

Goals and Objectives

OBJECTIVES

Service	Target	Actual
Average 911 Call Answer Times	5 seconds	4.726 seconds
Average Administrative Call Answer Times	2 seconds	1.233 seconds
Total Text Message Sessions	100	112 (2nd-4th Q)

Safety

Quality Assurance	Target	Actual
CO Serious Errors	168	128
CO Non-Serious Errors	190	87

Relations

Educational Outreach	Target	Actual
Community Events (<i>Small/Large Groups</i>)	5	4.5
Observers	5	22
911 Center Tours	2	0
Educational Contacts (<i>Media/Schools</i>)	1	1.5

Referrals

	Projected	Actual
Fire and Rescue Calls for Service	14,000	16,204
Law Enforcement Calls for Service	90,000	102,483
Western Virginia Water Authority	4,000	1,930

Goals and Objectives

OBJECTIVES

Employee Care

Communications Officers Education

149 internal refresher training courses on a variety of topics were offered during this fiscal year.

1 individual were referred for remedial training during this fiscal year.

Professional Contributions

	Target	Actual
Professional 911 Boards Service <i>NENA/APCO</i>	1	1
Professional 911 Certifications <i>NENA/APCO</i>	2	6
National Training Certifications <i>CTO/EMD</i>	6	6
State Instructor Certifications (<i>not recerts</i>)	2	3

PROGRESS REPORT

The Roanoke County Emergency Communications Center is pleased to report that we have met or exceeded our objectives in the following areas:

We offered more internal refresher training opportunities to staff through the dedication of our state certified instructors and communications training officers who developed targeted training modules for their platoons; therefore, increasing the number of platoon trainings.

We have implemented the following changes to ensure superior performance next fiscal year:

We are evaluating our CTOs in order to enhance their strengths and help them improve their skills to better train new hires. Our CTOs have developed notes for each Task Sheet item and we have continued reviewing all items with each platoon to obtain a more consistent level of work performance throughout the center as a whole.

Specialized Assignment Review

Accreditation Coordinator

The Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) Accreditation Coordinator manages the CALEA assessment process and the departmental written directives system. The purpose of the position is to undergo annual reviews and obtain CALEA reaccreditation. The position has expanded to include Quality Assurance (QA) while maintaining electronic CALEA documentation in PowerDMS. We were awarded with Excellence for our re-accreditation in November 2019. We are on task to complete our third successful Compliance Service Manager (CSM) review electronically next fiscal year.

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation Manager

The Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) Manager oversees the ECC American Safety and Health Institute (ASHI) Training Center and ensures minimum CPR standards for emergency communications services are met. The position provides classroom instruction and maintains agency certification as a Training Center. We continue to independently certify our employees, allowing flexibility in class scheduling.

Emergency Medical Dispatch Manager

The Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) Manager ensures minimum EMD standards for emergency communications services are met and reports on data collected from EMD calls. During this fiscal year, the position continued providing monthly statistics to the platoon supervisors to identify individual performance trends. During this entire fiscal year, calls were evaluated and information was retained for APCO compliance.

Specialized Assignment Review

Outreach Coordinator

The Outreach Coordinator manages departmental education of our service community, news media contact, and recruitment. During this fiscal year, the position has been impacted by COVID-19. The position works closely with Roanoke County Police Crime Prevention and Roanoke County Fire and Rescue Public Education. We are working to increased the number of applications, the number of candidates tested, and the number of personnel hired.

Quality Assurance Manager

The QA Manager ensures minimum standards for emergency communications services are met and exemplary service is recognized. Currently, the position uses Excel spreadsheets to tabulate exceptional individual performance and error trends.

Training Coordinator

The Communications Training Coordinator (CTC) manages the new hires and continuing education training programs. The position inputs training records into an electronic system allowing for automated reporting. During this fiscal year, this position has been dramatically impacted by COVID-19. The position has delegated continuing education opportunities to the shift supervisors, allowing more time to be devoted to the new hire training and retention. This has resulted in fourteen personnel being hired compared to seven in the last fiscal year.

Agency Improvement Reviews

GRIEVANCES

Summary by Resolution Level

<i>Meeting with Step 1 Official</i>	1
<i>Meeting with Top Level Official</i>	0
<i>Meeting with County Administrator</i>	0
<i>Panel Hearing</i>	0
<i>Circuit Court Petition</i>	0

Analysis of Actions

The one instance of the grievance process being utilized, demonstrated the effectiveness of the process. The grievance that was filed was in reference to a disciplinary action and the resultant consequences. The review required by the grievance process determined that the punitive actions taken as a result of the internal investigation were not directly tied to the sole facts of the complaint.

Policy & Procedure Review

The Roanoke County Employee Handbook, which includes the Grievance Policy, was reviewed July 2017. We reviewed Form B, which is used to file grievances, and recommended no changes to Roanoke County Human Resources staff. The form will remain available through direct contact with Human Resources staff, so accountability in the filing and processing of grievances can be maintained.

Conclusions

In our review of policies and procedures, it was apparent that the procedure is rarely used. The County onboarding process was revised 3 years ago to ensure standardized training of all new employees. Orientation training now includes a review of the Grievance Policy. It was concluded that recurring refresher training should be provided to all employees to make the grievance process easier to access.

Agency Improvement Reviews

INTERNAL INVESTIGATIONS AS A RESULT OF A COMPLAINT

Summary by Disciplinary Action

Supervisory Referral — 0

Counseling / Oral Reprimand — 1

Written Reprimand — 0

Suspension — 0

Demotion / Transfer — 1

Dismissal / Resignation — 0

Summary by Conclusions

Unfounded — 1

Not Sustained — 0

Exonerated — 0

Sustained — 2

Analysis of Actions

There were three official complaints this fiscal year, that resulted in internal investigations being completed by ECC staff. Two of the complaints were found to be Sustained and one was determined to be Unfounded. The first resulted in a written reprimand that was later grieved and changed to an oral reprimand. The second was handled by means of demotion and the third was found to be unfounded so no action was taken.

Policy & Procedure Review

General Order 14 concerning Disciplinary Actions and Internal Investigations was reviewed and revised in May 2021 to show that employees personnel files were confidential. The Internal Investigation Advisement and Conclusion forms were reviewed and revised in July 2018.

Conclusions

In reviewing these complaints over the fiscal year, we only reviewed those that were official complaints (these could be from our first responder partners or from the citizens in the communities that we serve). With one complaint being unfounded, one being sustained and one being grieved and modified, an analysis of the effectiveness of our current complaint process is inconclusive due to the small number of data to be reviewed.

Agency Improvement Reviews

LIABILITY EXPOSURE REPORTS

Summary by Risk Category

Obtaining Information - 9
Documenting Information - 9
Relaying Information - 2
Outside Scope - 10
Other - 2

Summary by Action Category

Policy - 0
Inattention to Detail - 19
Other - 13

Analysis of Actions & Conclusions

The majority of the inattention to detail errors were minor and corrected through informal individualized refresher training. Remedial training and disciplinary actions were provided to individual communications officers with recurring similar errors. Platoon trainings were provided, we as a center are working towards reviewing the Task List that is issued to all new employees. This is a review for all employees and consist of Call Taking, CAD, Police, Fire and Rescue, VCIN.

Policy & Procedure Review

General Order 2, which includes liability exposure reporting, was reviewed and revised in January 2020 and up for annual review in November 2020. The Liability Exposure form was reviewed and revised in July 2018.



Agency Improvement Reviews

PERSONNEL EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM (PEIP)

Summary by Review Category

<i>Referrals</i>	0
<i>Attendance</i>	4
<i>Behavior</i>	0
<i>Initiative</i>	0
<i>Leadership</i>	0

Analysis of Actions

The review of the PEIP program with supervisory staff demonstrated that three employees were identified prior to disciplinary action in permanent personnel file records or liability exposure. These employees were provided with coaching, counseling and minor corrective action. Two of these employees continued working for the Department through the end of the fiscal year.

Policy & Procedure Review

General Order 14 regarding disciplinary action was reviewed and revised May 27th, 2021. The Standard Operating Guideline regarding Guardian Tracking software was reviewed in April of 2021 but no changes were necessary.

Conclusions

The PEIP Program has benefitted the organization for retention and served as an effective early intervention tool. Due to the restructure of the quarterly PEIP reports , we are accurately monitoring employee performance. The report aligns with defined employee behaviors and actions; trigger levels for reviews; reviews of identified employees and expectations for agency reporting.

Agency Improvement Reviews

QUALITY ASSURANCE

Summary by Serious Error Category

Incident Location - 8

Call Type / Severity - 18

Pertinent Questions (i.e. weapons, COVID-19) - 22

Appropriate Dispatch Procedure - 14

Appropriate Units Dispatched - 0

Relayed Safety Information - 0

Clear, Concise, and Complete Call Narrative - 45

Analysis of Actions

The majority of serious errors are related to narrative entry by call takers. Remedial training and disciplinary actions were provided to one individual communications officers with recurring serious errors for Call Taking. Platoon training was provided for the center to help with decreasing errors.

Policy & Procedure Review

General Order 11 was reviewed and revised in March 2021. EMD Instructors qualifications were updated. No changes were recommended to the current procedures of Communications Team Supervisors (CTS) assisting the Accreditation Coordinator with the completion of Quality Assurance (QA) evaluations and an additional APCO EMD instructor assisting the EMD Manager with EMD QA evaluations.

Conclusions

We continue to build call taking skills in our communications officers. Communications Team Supervisors continue to identify trends in QA evaluations and respond with platoon refresher training and individual remedial training, as needed. The Communications Training Coordinator did not provide training to any employee as a direct result of QA data analysis.

Agency Improvement Reviews

RISK MANAGEMENT

Summary of Incidents

Number of Reported Incidents - 2

Issues / Conditions Affecting Risk

Both incidents were reported to the Risk Management Team. Upon their investigation they determined that there were no identifiable hazards in the workplace.

All new employees participate in Workplace Violence Training through Roanoke County Human Resources. This training provides clear categories of unacceptable behavior and procedures for employees to follow. All employees have been educated on Roanoke County's "Zero Tolerance" for workplace violence and harassment.

Issues / Conditions Affecting Worker's Compensation

In 2020, VACORP completed an annual review of our facility to ensure compliance with facility safety and security. The annual review evaluated the following topics: Management Practices, Physical Safety, Safety Preparedness, Emergency Response, Accidents, and OSHA. There were no concerns noted.

Issues / Conditions Affecting Liability

"Harassment Made Simple" training was completed by all ECC employees. The program gives the employees a thorough overview of the protected groups, sexual harassment, prevention techniques and retaliation. In addition, the video covers current topics such as text messaging, email and bullying. Along with Harassment, Diversity Awareness and Workplace Ethics, a variety of legal topics are taught to the new hires in the Basic DCJS Academy. Some of the legal topics include, but not limited to, liability, duty to act, negligence, and personal vs department responsibility.

CALEA Accreditation

Reaccreditation Process

VACAP Biannual Meetings

Accreditation Manager Taylor Ralph and Assistant Accreditation Manager Teresa Blackwood participated in the VACAP training conference in the Fall 2019. They received additional information regarding the new version of the assessment and how well the agencies were transitioning in to it. They also networked with other Virginia public safety agencies. Due to COVID-19, the Fall conference was not attended.

External Annual Review Process— July 2019

Compliance Service Manager (CSM) Brad Fraser completed an onsite review of agency documentation. CSM Fraser had a suggestion for agency improvement involving recruitment. He stated we should research and determine if the agency could benefit from expanding social media presence to showcase agency successes and employment opportunities. He also had a suggestion regarding retention; continue the proactive approach in maintaining a positive working environment for employees.

CALEA Accreditation with Excellence Award— November 2019

According to CALEA Chairman Anthony Purcell and Director Craig Hartley, the ECC was awarded CALEA Accreditation with Excellence. This award demonstrates a commitment to professionalism and CALEA Accreditation. The ECC became an institutionalized management model for the organization.

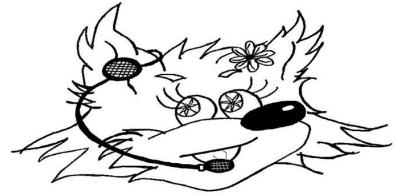
Future Reaccreditation Review —July 2023

CALEA assessors will conduct a site-based accreditation review of the ECC in July 2023. A few months later, the Assistant Director and Accreditation Manager will advocate for the agency to a CALEA Commissioner Review Panel at the Fall CALEA Conference.





Community Outreach



Events

The ECC did not participate in any events this fiscal year due to COVID-19. A parade was done for a child in our community along with Roanoke County Police Department, and Woods Towing. A interview was also done with The Roanoke Times for a employee who was retiring after 30 years of service

Observers

During this fiscal year, the ECC did host any citizen observers due to COVID-19, we did have 12 applicant observers.

Tours

This year, we continued to work with Roanoke County Crime Prevention Officer Benton. We have decreased our tours due to COVID-19. A tour was provided to the Citizens Police Academy that complied with social distancing.

Education

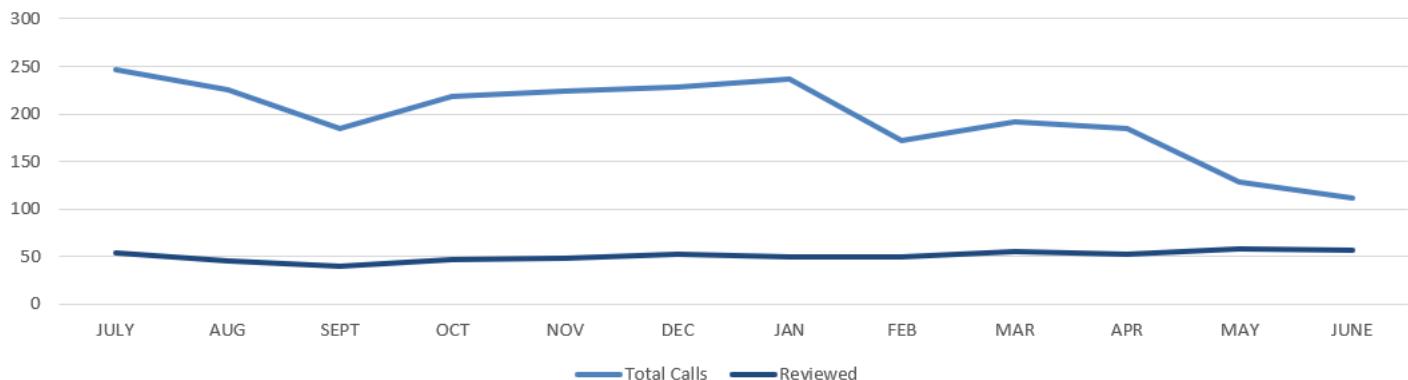
During this fiscal year, we had one educational contact, RVTV recorded a recruitment piece. We hope that this will assist the center recruit new applicants.

Emergency Medical Dispatch

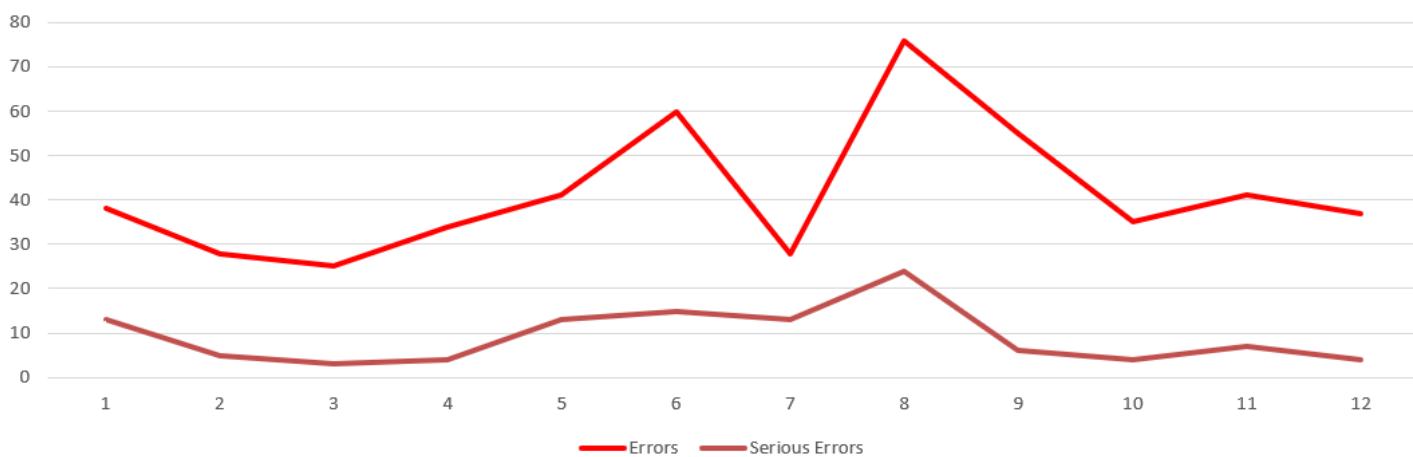
Quality Assurance

EMD Calls For Service

FY21 - EMD Instructions Provided for 2350 Calls



EMD Area for Improvement



Training

5 Communications Officer I personnel completed EMD Certification this fiscal year with instruction by CO Taylor Ralph. Our EMD instructors taught a minimum of 12 hours this year to maintain their certification.

Employee Awards

Rookie of the Year

COII Chelsie Reed

Communications Officer of the Year

COII Alex Mundy

Communications Training Officer of the Year

CTO Nikki Crush

Supervisor of the Year

CTS Beth Clemson

Platoon of the Year

A Platoon

Mentor of the Year

COII Nikita Simmons

911 Champion of the Year

COII Logan Spencer

EMD Award

COII Sienna Hebert

Call Taker of the Year

COII Sienna Hebert

Employee Awards

County Milestone Awards

The County of Roanoke recognizes years of service to their employees. During the fiscal year, the following individuals received recognition:

30 Years: Aleta Coleman

20 Years: Paige Chisom

5 Years: Taylor Ralph

1 Year: Allison Alley, Ericka McDonald

ECC Employee Recognition Programs

The Awards Committee is chaired by CTO Monica Bond .

Attendance Award

All employees released from probation, other than the Assistant Director and the Emergency Communications Manager, are eligible for the award. Once a quarter , an employee's unscheduled leave will be evaluated. Those employees who have not used any in the quarter will receive an award. At the end of the fiscal year, those employees who have not used any unscheduled leave will receive an additional award.

The following communications officers had Perfect Attendance for the fiscal year:

- Laura Allmon
- Juanita Austin
- Teresa Blackwood
- Monica Bond
- Lisa Charles
- Paige Chisom
- Nikki Crush
- Roy Davis
- Harley Gibson
- Kelsey Hart
- Sienna Hebert
- Gethin Kapoor
- Erick McDonald
- Alex Mundy
- Taylor Ralph
- Brandon Smith
- Logan Spencer
- Kristen Vierrether
- Stephanie Walsh

The Yearly Platoon Attendance Award was won by "A" Platoon.

Recruitment Program

Recruitment Plan

A comparison of the Roanoke County Emergency Communications Center service population to our employees demonstrates approximate proportions regarding most minorities. However, our agency currently employs less than the 1% of the service population that self-identifies as Black Non-Hispanic. While there are a lower number of males available for the workforce, the underutilization of male employees stands at 24.3%. This is up nearly 2% from the previous fiscal year.

Management is committed to continuing a pre-planned classroom and on-the-job training schedule for all new employees, based on feedback from recent hires. Management continues to provide workplace harassment and diversity awareness training biennially for all employees. All employees involved in recruitment received Equal Opportunity Employment, workplace diversity, and job benefits training as well. Management continues to encourage minority staff participation in the recruitment process, publicized agency photographs, and public education videos.

The Outreach programs targeted older populations this fiscal year. Due to continued lock down from COVID-19, the Outreach Program reached a lesser number of individuals. The ECC provides tours of the Emergency Communications Center to citizen groups; however, we did not have any requests this fiscal year.

Hiring

<i>Initial Testing</i> - 27	Retention
<i>Conditional Offers</i> - 13	<i>Completed Training</i> - 4
<i>Additional Screening</i> - 13	<i>Retained 3 years</i> - 19
<i>Final Offers</i> - 13	<i>Retained 5 years</i> - 13
<i>Hired</i> - 13	

Training Program

PowerDMS Courses

Academy	62
Mandatory	39
New Hire	44
On the Job	146
Promotional	1
Refresher	149
Remedial	2
Specialized	74

CTC Paige DeSilvey serves as our Communications Training Coordinator. She continues to provide monthly training in PowerDMS to our platoons through our Communications Training Officers . She provides quarterly continuing education to our Communications Training Officers and manages our biannual training academies for new hires.

The ECC personnel received approximately 3,913 hours of training hours during the fiscal year.



Upcoming Projects

Tyler New World Systems Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD)

Software System

Completed a server upgrade at the end of the fiscal year. Now running on Server 2022. Planning a CAD software update to version 2021.2 SP2 sometime in the beginning of the next fiscal year.



Intrado

Telephone System

Upgrade to the next version of Intrado Software and plan a hardware refresh.



Upcoming Projects

GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Periodic mapping updates were made as the GIS group completed their changes/updates.
Pictometry Fly-over is scheduled for Fall of 2022.



NICE Recording System

No new upgrades to NICE Inform during this fiscal year.



Roanoke County

Emergency Communications Center



Dial **911** for Emergencies

Call (540) 562-3265 for Non-Emergencies

