

Massachusetts State 911 Department Monthly Newsletter



Issue 3 | Volume 8 | March 2020

CONGRATULATIONS!



51st Public Safety Communications Academy

Fairhaven Police

Tyler Perry

Job Corps Region I

Kristien Burke
Chanel Farilien

Metro North RECC

Christian Chalonec
Jesse Fiorentino

Randolph Police

Gillian Haley

Fall River Police

Christopher Caron
Aaron Dudley
Jackson Tracy

Stephanie Lambert
Ashley Reichert
Dyllan Whisenant

Michael Roper
Marisa Verruto

Wellesley Police
Katherine Sharkey

Oxford Police

Trina Deary

Framingham Police

Ryan Fitzgerald
Lailah Itani

Metacomet RECC

Nicholas Gallo
Dean Guimares

Paulo Figueiredo

Wilmington Police

Brittany Sousa

Methuen Police

Joshua Boisvert

Palmer Police

Samantha Cusson

▶ CONGRATULATIONS.....	1
▶ COVID-19 UPDATE.....	2
▶ PROGRAMS UPDATE.....	4
▶ SYSTEMS UPDATE.....	5
▶ FISCAL UPDATE.....	6
▶ MASS EDP UPDATE.....	7
▶ 9-1-1 SPOTLIGHT.....	8

**The 52nd Public Safety
Communications Academy
that was scheduled for
May 11 – June 12, 2020 has
been POSTPONED!**
Stay tuned for a new date.

LATEST

NEWS

On behalf of Executive Director Frank Pozniak and the entire Staff at the State 911 Department we would like to extend our sincere gratitude and say thank you for your service during this unprecedented time. As always, the Department appreciates all of your hard work and collaborative efforts. Please continue to check our website www.mass.gov/e911 under the “Information for Call Centers” tab then the “Information on COVID-19” tab for the latest updates and important messages for our PSAPs. Two of the messages that can be found on our website are set forth below. And most importantly, stay safe and stay healthy. **Together we will get through this.**

COVID-19 Update from the Massachusetts State 911 Department

Please be informed that State 911 Department (Department), in coordination with the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS), is actively engaged in discussions on the monitoring and mitigation strategies regarding COVID-19.

The Department has been advised that the three approved Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) vendors for Massachusetts have communicated with the PSAPs and RECCs regarding the COVID-19 virus. Each PSAP and RECC has been advised of the appropriate EMD protocols pertaining to the COVID-19 virus. If your EMD vendor has not already provided you with information for handling calls that may be flu related, please use this link <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-for-ems.html> for assistance or contact your EMD vendor directly for guidance.

The State 911 Department strongly recommends that when dispatching first responders to calls for flu like symptoms, that the dispatcher follow local dispatch policies but to include advising first responders (Police, Fire, EMS) to respond using PPE (Personal Protection Equipment), a known term to first responders.

If you have reason to believe that your PSAP or RECC is infected with the virus and find it necessary to vacate your call center, our service provider Comtech can route your calls to an Alternate. Please contact Shahri Moin at 508-821-7306 or shahri.moin@mass.gov, or Charlie Ashworth at 508-821-7301 or Charles.ashworth@mass.gov, of the State 911 Department if you are looking for operational guidance or need to know what PSAP or RECC is currently assigned as your Alternate. Please contact these same people at the State 911 Department or the COMTECH HELP DESK at 855-626-4911 to begin the process if this situation occurs.

The State 911 Department strongly recommends that all PSAPs and RECCs communicate with their assigned Alternate now to discuss an increased call volume and a plan for radio communications for dispatching first responders (Police, Fire & EMS) in the event that an evacuation becomes necessary.

The Department strongly recommends all PSAPs and RECCs that have not already done so review their COOP plans in case their operations are affected by COVID-19. This includes communicating with your current Alternate to explore a process to dispatch (radio) in the event you cannot answer 911 calls. We also recommend that you research if another PSAP or RECC would be suitable to receive your 911 calls in the unlikely event both your PSAP and Alternate operations are negatively affected by COVID-19. Suitability would include among other factors, being able to handle the additional 911 call load and radio communications for dispatch.

COVID-19 Update from the Massachusetts State 911 Department— cont.

This is a communication to the Public Safety Answering Points from the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security and the State 911 Department (Department) regarding the telecommunicator certification requirements and other matters.

Please be informed that due to the current COVID-19 situation and its impact on training classes, the telecommunicator certification requirement deadline is extended from June 30, 2020 to August 31, 2020, and the PSAP/RECC Annual Certification of Compliance Form for Fiscal Year 2020 and Certified EMD Resource Annual Certification Form for Fiscal Year 2020 is to be submitted on or before September 14, 2020. While the deadlines are being extended due to the current extenuating circumstance, PSAPs and RECCs are encouraged to complete their certifications as soon as possible.

In addition, to address an expected shortage of telecommunicators, the Department will be introducing a temporary program to bring in new telecommunicators as soon as possible. Generally, under this program, the 40-hour basic telecommunicator certification requirement would be waived, the PSAP would be allowed to conduct a 4-hour, in-house equipment training using an in-house trainer and a 911 position at the PSAP, and if necessary, the EMD certification requirement would be temporarily waived for the new staff under this program. However, the 5 Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommended questions would need to be asked by the new people with each 911 call they answer. The details of this temporary program will be distributed to you next week.

With respect to your alternate, as a reminder and as set forth in the COVID-19 update from the Department previously sent to you, the Department strongly recommends that all PSAPs and RECCs communicate with their assigned Alternate to discuss an increased call volume and a plan for radio communications for dispatching first responders (Police, Fire and EMS) in the event an evacuation becomes necessary. The Department also strongly recommends that all PSAPs and RECCs that have not done so already to review their COOP plans in case their operations are affected by COVID-19. Please review again that COVID-19 update.

Further, the Department strongly recommends that you share with your Alternate the addresses of persons that have been tested positive for COVID-19 provided to you by your local board of health.

Updates from our Programs Division

In House NG9-1-1 Equipment Training Program

In an effort to support PSAPs that are experiencing staffing issues, the State 911 Department has developed a 4 hour, in-house NG9-1-1 equipment training using an in-house trainer selected by the PSAP. The in-house program allows a PSAP to temporarily waive the EMD certification instead advising staff to ask the 5 questions that are recommended by the CDC. Additionally, the State 911 Department is temporarily waiving the 40 hour Basic Telecommunicator certification.

Effective immediately, PSAPs can now use training material provided by the State 911 Department to train and certify staff in-house. Examples of eligible candidates for training are:

- Trainees that were not able to complete the training due to cancelled new hire classes.
- Police Officers, Firefighters and EMD/Paramedic that work for the town/city.
- Administrative staff from town/city offices.
- Vetted potential new hires.

A new application for the in-house training can be located on our website at www.mass.gov/e911 under the "Information for Call Centers" tab.

PSAPs wishing to participate in the training should follow the same process in place now which is to fill out the application and indicate the dates that you intend to conduct the in-house training. When the Programs Division receives the application they will send back the training packet along with an email offering further instruction.

The training packet includes:

1. Instructor materials which includes:

- Lesson plan and reference training materials
- EMD Advisement notice
- Job aids for CallStation, ResponseAssist, Equature ViewPoint, and Text-to-911 (for both Ring-all PSAPs and ACD PSAPs)
- Training roster
- Instructions for administering practical and written exams
- Written exam and answer sheet
- Practical exam sheet

2. Student materials which includes:

- EMD Advisement notice
- Job aids for CallStation, ResponseAssist, Equature ViewPoint, and Text-to-911 (for both Ring-all PSAPs and ACD PSAPs)

Please contact Programs Director Monna Wallace at monna.wallace@mass.gov if you have questions about the program.

Updates from our Systems Division

Text to 911 Service Provider Issue

Text to 911 uses a protocol called SMS. SMS is limited to 160 characters per message. Messages over 160 characters are broken apart, transmitted, then reassembled. At least one carrier has proven to have issues with messages over 160 characters. The texter will receive a “bounce back” message indicating the message was not delivered.

FYI:

Carriers continue to provide addresses in the legacy MSAG format. As a result, under some circumstances the map will not plot directly to the caller's location. Instead, the incident tile will list multiple options for the dispatcher to select. The list is prioritized based on “most likely” to “least likely.” **Telecommuters should use their local knowledge to select the appropriate address.**

911 System Redundancy – Alternate Routing

Any 911 call from a ring all PSAP that goes unanswered for 21 seconds and any call that goes unanswered at an ACD PSAP after 54 seconds will be automatically rerouted to the Alternate PSAP. This will cause an abandoned call at the primary PSAP.

If the Alternate PSAP does not answer the call within the time frames mentioned above the call will be rerouted to a final PSAP where it will ring until answered or the 911 caller's service provider terminates the call.

If you need to evacuate your PSAP...

1. **Log out, if possible.**
2. **Call the COMTECH HELP DESK at 855-626-4911 to tell them you are evacuating. The help desk will reroute transfers and E7 digit calls to your Alternate.**

Under normal conditions, any ring all dispatcher account can be used at any position in the State. Your staff can log in at another PSAP and immediately start getting 911 calls.

Then, call the COMTECH HELP DESK at 855-626-4911 to tell them you are resuming operations and they will undo the reroute of E7 digits and transfers.

When Selecting an Alternate

Keep in mind, your Alternate should be able to contact your response agencies via radio or telephone.

Updates from our Fiscal Division



FY 2021 REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT GRANT:

The deadline for filing an application under the FY 2021 Regional Development Grant program has been extended to 5:00 PM on **Monday, May 4, 2020**.



FY 2020 TRAINING GRANT:

The State 911 Department recognizes that Covid-19 has had a significant impact on, among other things, PSAPs' ability to train and re-certify its telecommunicators. Therefore, the Department has extended the requirement for completion of such training until August 31, 2020. In conjunction with this extension, the Department's FY 2020 Training Grant program will be extended through August 31, 2020. The Department will begin reaching out to PSAPs to extend existing contracts through the end of August. If you have completed your requirements under 560 CMR 5.0 and do **NOT** require an extension, please e-mail Cindy Reynolds at 911Deptgrants@mass.gov.



FY 2020 SUPPORT AND INCENTIVE GRANT:

The State 911 Department recommends that PSAPs with non-salary costs funded under the FY 2020 Support and Incentive Grant program reach out to its vendors to determine whether the vendor can fulfill the PSAP's request by June 30, 2020. To the extent, the vendor cannot meet its obligation by June 30, 2020; it is recommended that PSAPs request an extension of the FY 2020 Support and Incentive Grant for these non-salary costs. An authorized signatory under the grant should e-mail a request for an extension to Cindy Reynolds at 911Deptgrants@mass.gov. Where possible, said request should contain correspondence from the vendor indicating their inability to meet the June 30, 2020 deadline.



Amidst the Covid-19 outbreak, the State 911 Department's finance division continues its operations under an alternate work plan. We are working to provide continued support to our PSAPs. Please contact Karen Robitaille at Karen.Robitaille@mass.gov or at 508-821-7221 should you have any questions or concerns. Thank you for all you do and stay well!

Please monitor our website (www.mass.gov/e911) for updates on the FY 2021 grant programs.

If you have questions or require assistance, please contact
Karen Robitaille at 508-821-7221 or email at karen.robitaille@mass.gov

Updates from Mass EDP

The Massachusetts Equipment Distribution Program (Mass EDP), remains in operation under a limited capacity as a result of the COVID 19 virus. Home visits have been suspended as well as all outreach events until further notice. We are still communicating with our clients by telephone and email, and are processing applications as they are received. When possible we are drop shipping telephones to our clients to better assist them.

This process will remain in place until we are able to resume normal operations.

If you have questions or concerns, please call EDP Manager Grant Harrison at 508-821-7234 or email him at grant.harrison@mass.gov.



To speak with a customer service representative, call **1-800-300-5658 Voice/TTY**.

Find us on Facebook!
Massachusetts State 911
@MAstate911

Follow us on Twitter!
@MAstate911

Visit our website!
www.mass.gov/e911



911 Spotlight: Anthony Leblanc of Webster, MA

On January 27, 2020 while home alone with his Mom, 7 year old Anthony called 911 to report that his Mom was choking and losing consciousness. Anthony was able to provide the dispatcher with his address and continuous updates on his Mom's condition. When the ambulance was close by, he went outside to flag them down so that he could take them to his Mom. The MA State 911 Department hereby recognizes Anthony LeBlanc for knowing how to report an emergency and saving your Mom's life.



911 Spotlight: Brenda Santucci of Boxborough, MA

The State 911 Department proudly spotlights Brenda Santucci of Boxborough, MA. Brenda has served on the Boxborough Police Department as a dedicated and committed dispatcher for the last 26 years and is retiring this month. Back in 2016, Boxborough was the first PSAP to transition to NG911 and Brenda took the first NG911 call for the State of Massachusetts. In appreciation of her 26 years of dedicated service to 911 communications as well as the citizens of the Commonwealth, our Department would like to say thank you for your service and best wishes in your new chapter of retirement!



**Pictured above:
Boxborough Police Chief
Warren Ryder and
Boxborough Dispatcher
Brenda Santucci**