

Massachusetts State 911 Department Monthly Newsletter

Issue 3

Volume 9

March 2021



MARCH IS INTERNATIONAL

Listen^{ing} AWARENESS MONTH

Because the month of March is “**Listening Awareness Month**”, the State 911 Department is highlighting the most important skill necessary to being a successful 9-1-1 telecommunicator/dispatcher, and that is “**listening**”.

The role of a 9-1-1 telecommunicator/dispatcher is critical when it comes to effectively communicating with people in emotional or physical distress. They are almost always the first person that a caller communicates with when they have a medical emergency, or are distressed due to something bad that is taking place around or near them.

In order to do the job effectively, a telecommunicator/dispatcher must have the ability to stay focused on the caller and **listen** closely to what they are reporting often in chaotic situations, which can be difficult. **Listening** closely to the callers words and interpreting background noise is a necessary skill that a 9-1-1 telecommunicator/dispatcher must always use when an emergency is being reported. Keeping in mind that not all 9-1-1 callers are distressed, some are calm and collected. Paying attention to the tone and fluctuation of a callers voice can sometimes lend more to the story than what is being reported.

Effective **listening** is a learned skill. Take time regularly to review your own calls to ensure that you aren't speaking over the caller. Make sure that you are **listening** carefully to what they are saying while at the same time maintaining control of the call. When conducting quality assurance for your PSAP, make sure that **listening** is one of the quality assurance components that you are **listening** for.

Thank you all for what you do each and every day of the year.

▶ LISTENING AWARENESS MONTH	1
▶ PROGRAMS UPDATE.....	2
▶ STATE 911 PSAPs UPDATE...	4
▶ SYSTEMS UPDATE.....	6
▶ FISCAL UPDATE.....	7
▶ MASS EDP UPDATE.....	8
▶ 9-1-1 SPOTLIGHT.....	9

The FY 2021 Annual
Certification of Compliance
forms have been posted on our
website! www.mass.gov/e911

LATEST

NEWS

Updates from our Programs Division

New training class!

The State 911 Department is partnering with the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MCDHH) to offer a new two (2) hour, virtual training course. The course will be titled, *"Emergencies and Effective Interaction with Deaf or Hard of Hearing Individuals."* The first course is set to be piloted in the month of May and will be taught by MCDHH staff members on the virtual platform WebEx. Please note, all attendees to this class are eligible to use it as two hours towards their sixteen hours of continuing education. A roster will be taken at the start of the class for record keeping.

The schedule and course application can be found on our website, www.mass.gov/e911. For questions, please email 911training@massmail.state.ma.us.



Are you your PSAPs Municipal Coordinator? If not, do you know who is?

According to 560 CMR 2.00 Appendix A, *"Every municipality participating in the Enhanced 9-1-1 system shall designate a person to serve as the local contact person with the Executive Office of Public Safety, the Board, and the telephone company for all issues regarding 9-1-1 service."* The person designated for this role is known as the Municipal Coordinator.

The State 911 Department's Public Education Coordinator, Katelyn Sylvia is in the process of connecting with each PSAP in the Commonwealth to be sure the municipal coordinator information we have on file is accurate and up to date. If you are your centers municipal coordinator, please watch for an email from Katelyn.

If there are any questions or concerns, Katelyn Sylvia can be reached at Katelyn.A.Sylvia@mass.gov.

April 11-17, 2021

National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week

<https://www.npstw.org/>
Sponsored by APCO International

How will you be celebrating your Public Safety Telecommunicators this year? We invite you to share with us what you are doing in your PSAPs throughout the week.

Massachusetts State 911 Department Facebook Page
@MAstate911 #MADispatchersAreStars

Updates from our Programs Division—continued

March is American Red Cross Month!

American Red Cross Disaster Team provides basic emergency needs for families and individuals that are affected by fire, flood, or other disaster. Red Cross can help to provide food, shelter, clothing, mental health, and assistance with medication replacement.



When should a PSAP call Red Cross?

When a family has been displaced from their home due to some sort of disaster and they need assistance with basic emergency needs. Instances when a PSAP may need to call Red Cross are: single house fires, multi family fires, weather events, transportation disasters, mass casualty events, and terrorist events. After about 20 minutes of first responders on scene, Red Cross would like the PSAP to radio on scene personnel and ask if there are any displaced individuals and if Red Cross should be contacted. **The sooner the PSAP notifies Red Cross to respond, the quicker they will be on scene to advocate for the victims that are being displaced.**

EARLY NOTIFICATION IS BEST.

How to contact Red Cross from your PSAP:

By phone: **1-800-564-1234**. The answering operator will ask you all questions necessary to dispatch Red Cross. Some of these questions will include the type of incident, the address of the incident, an on scene phone number to get client information and begin the case virtually, and the number of people/families being displaced. Once Red Cross has been contacted, the operator will pass all information collected on to the Disaster Team dispatcher who will then dispatch the Red Cross volunteers. The Disaster Team dispatcher will call the PSAP back within 15 minutes to confirm their ETA.

**Red Cross is an amazing and a beneficial tool we have to assist in times of need.
Please use it!**

Report Suspicious Activity.

If you

SEE

something,



then

SAY

something.

North Shore Regional 9-1-1 Center

North Shore 911 Center integral part of rescue efforts for lost hikers in Essex

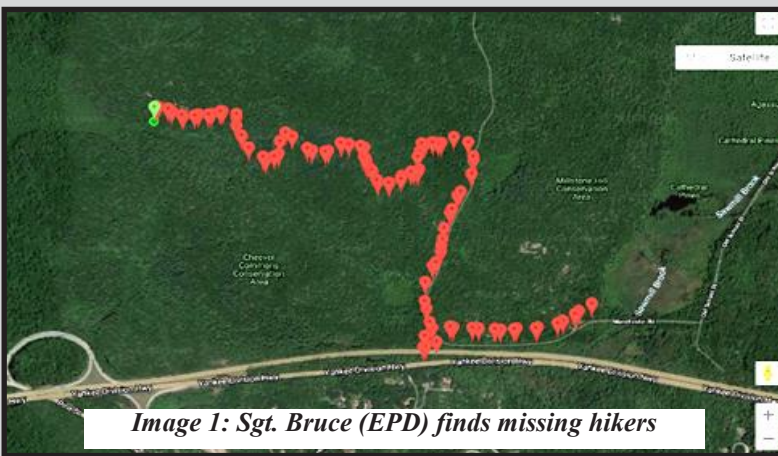
On March 23, 2021, at approximately 1:42 PM, North Shore Regional 911 Center (NSR911) received a call reporting that two hikers were lost in the woods. The individuals had gone off of a trail and were unaware of their surroundings. Essex Police Department was aided by the Manchester-by-the-Sea and Hamilton Police Departments in the search.

TC Anthony Hooker, who was the call-taker training with Supervisor Alex McKeon, spoke with the caller and tried to pinpoint the caller's exact location. Using Wireless Phase 2 (WPH2) mapping capabilities, NSR911 had a general radius of where the stranded hikers were but could not pinpoint their exact location.

Mapping and details obtained by TC Anthony Hooker were then relayed to Essex Police units by TC Katelynn Chuilli. After initial dispatch, TC Sean Cullen jumped in to offer assistance with the call. TC Hooker continued working with the caller to obtain additional details to aid in the search (i.e., where did they start hiking from, how far did they hike, and what could they see and hear).

The Essex Fire Department was requested to stage by TC Abigail Pare, meanwhile, TC Chuilli requested mutual aid from Manchester-by-the-Sea and Hamilton Police. Chuilli also called in off-duty officers from Essex Police Department to assist with the search and requested assistance from the Massachusetts State Police (MSP) Air Wing and K9 units.

During the initial search, the caller mentioned that they could see a helicopter directly overhead. It was determined, through a flight tracker application, that the helicopter was being operated by Fox25 News. With the assistance of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), NSR911 TCs were able to make contact with the helicopter. Fox25 circled the area which helped to guide responders to the location in the woods. The helicopter pilot also assisted in trying to visually locate the lost hikers while circling the area while the MSP Air Wing was enroute.



Utilizing available tools, NSR911 TCs requested one of the police officers to call 911 so NSR911 could utilize DDTI and RapidSOS mapping capabilities. DDTI mapping and the RapidSOS Portal mapping, both were being utilized and were essential in relaying information to responders. The RapidSOS mapping provided a “cookie crumb” trail showing the real-time

location of police officers in comparison to the lost hikers. TC Cullen remained on the line with Sgt. Dan Bruce of the Essex Police Department for almost two hours giving him turn-by-turn directions to the lost hikers and back out of the woods! Cullen also used a trail map from AllTrails.com to aid responding officers.

(continued on page 5)

Updates from our State 911 Department PSAPs—continued

(continued from page 4)

This incident was a great example of a successful regional, interoperable effort. Factors such as incredible teamwork by NSR911 staff, good communication with responding agencies, and the ability to think outside of the box using resources like RapidSOS, AllTrails, and the assistance of a news helicopter in the search all contributed to a positive outcome for all those involved.

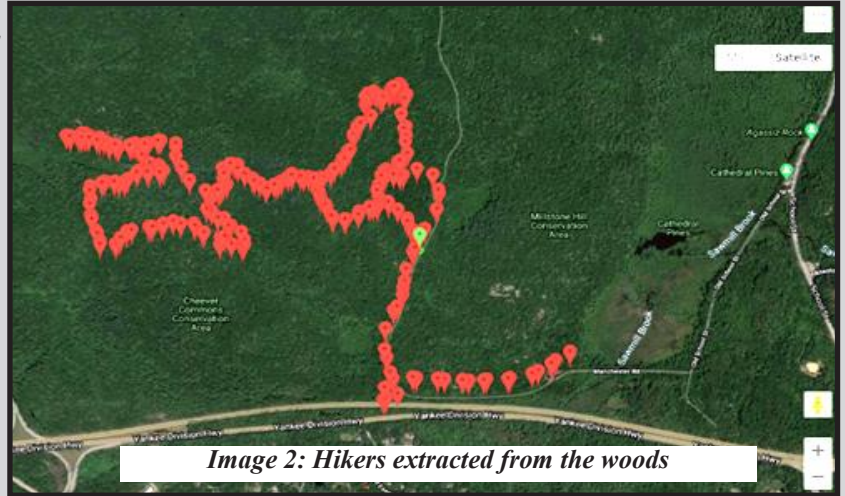


Image 2: Hikers extracted from the woods

Massachusetts State 911 PSAP Operations Division (POD-1)

Just Paint for Me

By day, Leah Pappalardo is one of our very own 9-1-1 dispatchers at POD-1. By night, she is a newly discovered self taught painter, specializing in painting pictures of pets. Leah discovered her love for painting just last year after losing her personal pet cat, and has since painted dozens of pictures in just 11 short months.

During her interview with WBZ-TV Leah said, “working in a stressful environment as a 9-1-1 dispatcher, it’s very exciting to come home and put a smile on somebody else’s face.” While Leah specializes in painting pictures of pets who have passed away to give their owners a piece of their pet that will remain with them forever, she does paint living pets as well. And just recently, she has started to paint pictures of people.

To request a painting be done by Leah, visit her Instagram page https://www.instagram.com/justpaintfor_me/

or Facebook page [@JustPaintFor Me](https://www.facebook.com/JustPaintForMe).

Congratulations on the success of your small business, Leah. The State 911 Department is proud of you. Keep up the amazing work both at POD-1 and at your painting studio!



Photo credit: WBZ-TV

Updates from our Systems Division

System Security

The Massachusetts NG9-1-1 system has undergone security testing by Department personnel, EOPSS personnel as well as all of our NG911 Vendors. We even hired a third party security firm to assess our NG9-1-1 system.

A brief list of what is incorporated from a systems security perspective includes, redundancy, firewalls, virus & anti-malware software, live monitoring, and up to date systems patching. The parts of the system that do “touch” the internet are continuously attacked from around the world, but all call path data routes are not accessible from the internet. We have a holistic security profile that monitors all of our endpoints.

Areas of improvement from a systems perspective are focused on Telephony Denial of Service attacks (TDOS). Historically these types of attacks were unlikely due to the architecture of E911 and telephony technology. With prevalence and rapid adoption of VoIP technology TDOS becomes a much bigger threat not only to any NG9-1-1 system but also to the Public Switched Telephone Network.

- We don't allow USB devices, because they are an infection source. A burned CD is not.
- The equipment at the PSAP don't have email, Microsoft Office or an internet connection, to prevent them as sources of infection. Only NG9-1-1 programs are allowed to run, any other program is locked out.
- The VPN allows validated users to connect via their own hardware to access recordings and/or MCW reports only. Since this is the only external connections point, it is a possible entry point for malware. Millions of dollars can be invested in technologies to protect systems but the weakest link in any security profile is carelessness by users. Please make sure your systems are patched regularly and you have an active antivirus subscription. Your vigilance is appreciated.

Find us on Facebook!
Massachusetts State 911
@MAstate911
Visit our website!
www.mass.gov/e911



Updates from our Fiscal Division

March



Budget modifications under the FY21 Grant programs are required on or before March 26, 2021. Please contact Karen Robitaille at 508-821-7221 should you have any questions.



Development Grant award recipients are reminded that requests for extension(s) for funding of projects that will not be completed by June 30, 2021 should be submitted on or before March 31, 2021. All requests should provide a detailed narrative identifying the project and anticipate project timeline.



While the deadline for filing reimbursements under the FY 2021 grant programs is July 31, 2021, PSAPs and RECCs are strongly encouraged to file reimbursement requests within 30 days of incurring costs as noted in the grant guidelines. Implementing a filing schedule that complies with this requirement will assist your municipality in recovering eligible costs under these programs in a timely fashion. All reimbursements requests are currently being processed within 30 business days. However, PSAPs and RECCs are reminded that Department staff continues to work within a remote environment and a large influx of reimbursements could affect this timeline. Our advice: **File early; File Often.**



The FY 2022 Training, Emergency Medical Dispatch, and Support and Incentive Grant guidelines and applications are available on the State 911 Department's website. The funding period is July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022. Apply early to ensure a July 1, 2021 start date. The FY 2022 Development Grant application period is now closed. The Department received 21 applications in support of PSAP regionalization. All applications are currently under review by the Department.



Given the current restrictions and remote work environment of staff members, the Department does not anticipate hosting grant camps for FY 2022. However, the Department can host virtual sessions with PSAPs and RECCs to assist with the application and/or reimbursement process. Please contact Karen Robitaille at 508-821-7221 or Karen.Robitaille@mass.gov to schedule a session.

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

Updates from MassEDP

The Massachusetts Equipment Distribution Program (MassEDP) continues to remain in operation during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. While home visits have been temporarily suspended, we are still communicating with and providing customer service for our clients by telephone and email as well as processing new applications as they are received. This process will remain in place until we are able to resume normal operations. In addition, the MassEDP team would like to share that we are working diligently in hopes to provide virtual outreach opportunities through a virtual platform in the near future. We will continue to update you on our progress as we move forward.

If you have questions or concerns, please call MassEDP 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**.

MassEDP Phone Spotlight ~ iPhone XR

Features:

- Wireless device, black in color
 - 64GB memory
- 6.1' diagonal all-screen LCD multi-touch display
 - Liquid retina HD display
 - Face ID
 - Long lasting battery
- Wireless Charging Capability



MassEDP is pleased to announce that we now offer the iPhone XR as the Program's first ever wireless device choice for our clients. The cell phone is pre-programmed with applications based on the applicant's disability.

Please note, MassEDP DOES NOT provide the cellular data plan.

Spring Forward!

Earlier this month on Sunday, March 14, 2021 at 2:00am we “sprung ahead” and moved the clocks forward one hour for the start of daylight saving time. Some may say that losing the hour of sleep every year causes them to have difficulty concentrating, difficulty being productive, and causes them to suffer from exhaustion. Here are some tips on ways you can help your body adjust to the time change and minimize health problems that may come with it.



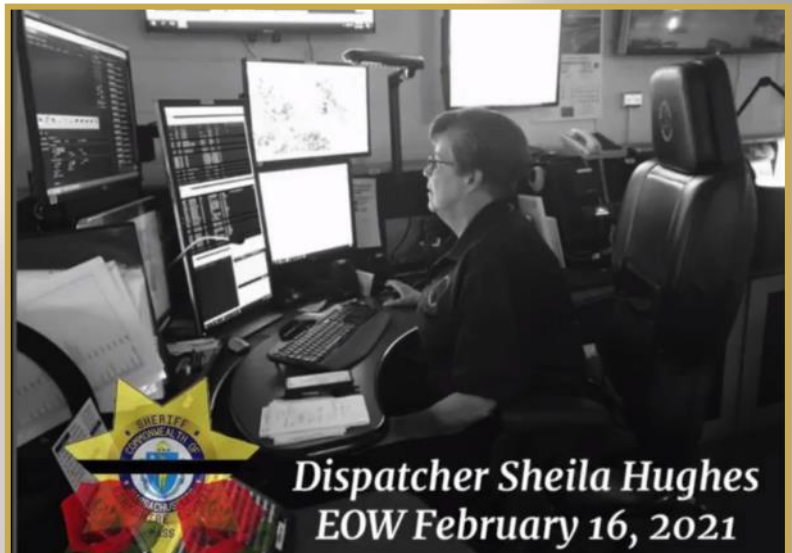
1. Be consistent in your wake up time. Having your body on a routine creates a more regular sleep cycle and will make your body feel more rested in the mornings.
2. Exercise during the day, this will help you sleep more soundly at night.
3. Enjoy the longer daylight evenings. Sunlight is good for your health and happiness! Enjoy the natural light outdoors when weather allows.
4. Allow your internal clock to adjust. Give your body time to get used to the change.
5. Relax and reduce screen time before bed. Give your body time to unwind. Scrolling through your phone just before bed can lead to difficulty falling asleep, leading to stress and insomnia. Rest when your body needs it.

9-1-1 Spotlight:

Berkshire County Sheriff's Office Dispatcher Sheila Hughes

The State 911 Department would like to offer our sincere condolences to Berkshire County Sheriff's Office Dispatcher Sheila Hughes family and coworkers. Sheila is remembered by her colleagues for her calm radio voice, longtime service, and caring personality. She will be deeply missed.

***Rest in Peace Sheila, the
Massachusetts dispatchers have the
watch from here.***



**Dispatcher Sheila Hughes
EOW February 16, 2021**

Picture credit: Berkshire County Sheriff's Office Facebook Page