

Massachusetts State 911 Department

July 2024 Newsletter



Issue 7

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In Honor of Dispatcher Amanda Stone Northborough Police Department



The State 911 Department is deeply saddened by the news that long-time Northborough Police Department Dispatcher Amanda Stone recently passed away. Amanda served the Town of Northborough for the past 12 years, and considered her coworkers and officers family. Amanda persevered through a lengthy battle with cancer, rarely missing a shift. Even on some of her most difficult health days, she showed up to answer the calls for those in need. Her dedication to ensuring the safety of the men and women of Northborough Fire and Northborough Police, as well as all of the citizens, was exemplary. For that, we spotlight her legacy and impressive career with 9-1-1. We send our most sincere sympathy to her 9-1-1 colleagues, as well as her family and friends during this incredibly difficult time.

~ Rest in Peace Ma'am ~
We've got the watch from here.

Updates from our Programs Division



Spotlight Your Dispatchers!

Do you have a dispatcher who has gone above and beyond? One that was able to save a life? We want to feature their story! Each month our newsletter highlights the work that telecommunicators do every day. We want to spotlight a job well done, and also recognize important events such as dispatcher retirements, or other major events. The newsletter also highlights our Lifesaver Award that is given to telecommunicators that successfully saved a life. If submitting for our lifesaver award, and EMD procedures are applicable, please include a recording with your submission.

All submissions can be sent to Public Education Coordinator
Erica Adams at Erica.L.Adams@mass.gov

Have You Submitted your FY2024 Certification of Compliance Form?

The FY2024 Annual Certification of Compliance Form is now available on our website at www.mass.gov/e911 under “Information for Call Centers” -> “FY2024 Annual Certification of Compliance Forms.”

The Form is Due on or before July 31, 2024. As soon as your PSAP has completed all of the compliance requirements, submit your form to expedite processing.



REMINDERS:

- Annual Certification of Compliance Forms are **NO LONGER** accepted electronically.
- Proof of CPR and Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) **must be included with the FY 2024 submissions for PSAPs that are providing EMD in-house and also for all certified EMD resources.**
- For PSAPs who provide EMD, **a detailed explanation and SAMPLE of documents used for EMD quality assurance must be included.**

For questions about the FY2024 Annual Certification of Compliance process, email Monna.Wallace@mass.gov.

Attention 9-1-1 dispatchers: We are testing “Text-to-911”

State 911 Department trainers are currently traveling across the Commonwealth **testing** “Text-to-911”.

At the beginning of the test, the State 911 Department trainer will immediately identify themselves and advise that they **do not have an emergency** and then ask what PSAP is receiving the text.

Trainers will follow up with a phone call to the two-way line at the PSAP if they send a text and it goes unanswered or if there appears to be difficulty with the text process.

Trainers can also visit the PSAP while they are in the area if the PSAP has questions or difficulties with the “Text” process and wishes to speak with the trainer in person.

Testing will continue throughout the Summer into the Fall.

PSAPs can print a copy of the “Text-to-911” job aid on our website.

Ring-All PSAPs click [HERE](#) to download.

Automatic Call Distributor (ACD) PSAPs click [HERE](#) to download.

Please email Monna.Wallace@mass.gov if you have any questions.



Ryan Gruner

Scituate Public Safety



Pictured Above: Fire Chief Mark Donovan, Dispatcher Ryan Gruner, and Police Chief Mark Thompson

On Tuesday June 18, 2024, just after 1:00pm, Ryan Gruner was on duty at the Scituate PSAP when RapidSOS chimed which typically indicates that a 9-1-1 call is about to present. Because of a technical issue within the 9-1-1 system, the 9-1-1 call did not ring into the center. Ryan treated this call as an abandoned 9-1-1 call and immediately used information from RapidSOS to obtain a call back number, placing a call back to the caller from his PSAP business line.

Upon reaching the caller he identified himself as Scituate 9-1-1 calling back and was advised by a female that her 10-month child had been choking and she had placed a call to 9-1-1. Luckily the child was able spit out the object and was breathing on its own. Scituate Police and Fire were dispatched to the caller's home to evaluate the child, where thankfully the child was unharmed.

Ryan's swift actions and knowledge of the 9-1-1 system prevented what could have been a tragedy. For this we thank Ryan Gruner for his service and dedication to 9-1-1.

Job Well Done!



Major Susan Schofield

Dukes County Sheriff's Office RECC

Major Susan Schofield, Communications Supervisor for the Dukes County Sheriff's Office Regional Emergency Communications Center (RECC) will be retiring at the end of July. Major Schofield has been with the Dukes County Sheriff's Office RECC for 27 years. She has been the Director for over 20 years, and has dedicated her time and energy to the RECC. Susan has played an integral role in the implementation and upkeep of the RECC's technology. We want to congratulate Major Schofield, and wish her the best in her next chapter!

Dispatcher Mary Long

Belchertown Police Department



Dispatcher Mary Long retired on June 30, 2024 after 24 years of dedicated service to the Town of Belchertown. Mary was honored with a ceremony and was gifted a plaque from the Belchertown Police Department, as well as an Official Citation from the State Senate. We want to congratulate Dispatcher Long, and wish her the best in her next chapter!



South Hadley Big Rig Day



On Thursday, July 18, 2024 State 911 Department Public Education Coordinator Erica Adams and Interns Chris Flynn and Hector Aponte attended South Hadley's Big Rig Day. Attendees were able to tour the Mobile PSAP, ask questions to one of South Hadley's dispatchers, and learn more about the 9-1-1 system. Erica, Chris, and Hector also educated people on the Silent Call Procedure, and Text-to-911 as they were waiting to board the truck. The team had 9-1-1 trivia, and educational activity books for kids ages K-4 to distribute as well. It was a great day for all. We look forward to attending again next year!

Community Outreach Events

Do you have an upcoming outreach event in your community? The State 911 Department and its MassEDP team would love to join forces with you!

For more information or to schedule an outreach event, please contact State 911 Department Public Education Coordinator, **Erica Adams by Email** at Erica.L.Adams@mass.gov





Get the Scoop! Be sure to review the “What’s New” section on the FY25 Grant Guidelines. There are changes that impact both the application and reimbursement process. Please review prior to submission of the application or reimbursement to ensure all requirements are met.



Time is melting away! All FY 2024 reimbursements are due on or before July 31, 2024. Please do a final review of your FY 2024 grants and reimbursement submission to ensure all requests have been filed.



Proper “Toppings”! Grant reimbursement forms are modified from year to year. Be sure you complete the proper fiscal year form for the reimbursement that you are preparing. Failure to utilize the proper form may result in reductions and/or a return of a reimbursement request thereby impacting your municipality’s ability to recover funds.



Receipt notifications are sent when reimbursements are received at the State 911 Department. In addition, payment notifications are sent once the reimbursement has been reconciled and submitted for payment processing. Please be sure to review and track these notifications. As the State 911 Department, like many, is facing staffing issues, it remains focused on reconciling reimbursements. Inquires regarding receipt of and/or the status of a reimbursement request will experience a delayed response.

Generator Test

We are coming up on power outage season. Please be sure to test your generator's functionality under **full load** to ensure it supplies power to the 9-1-1 equipment as well as the PSAP. This requires cutting street power and thus using the generator exclusively. This test not only verifies the proper sizing of the generator, it also validates the proper operation of the transfer switch. Following these recommendations helps to ensure your PSAP's operation is not affected when utility power is lost. Please note that the 9-1-1 equipment is protected by a UPS which supplies power for minimum of 30 minutes. Should the generator fail to supply power to the 9-1-1 equipment, Comtech will route your calls to your alternate PSAP. **Please notify the Help Desk before doing this test so that they are ready to assist should the need arise.**



Protect Your PSAP from Ransomware

The Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) has published a poster explaining many ways bad actors attack PSAPs. PSAPs are high value targets because of their role in public safety. You may download the poster at <https://www.cisa.gov/publication/next-generation-911>



What's new with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC)?

In June 2023, the FCC released a "Notice of Proposed Rulemaking" in FCC Docket 21-479 and 18 –64 regarding the nationwide transition to NG911. In that docket, the FCC proposed to expedite the NG911 transition by adopting certain requirements that would apply to wireline, Commercial Mobile Radio Service (CMRS), covered text providers, interconnected Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP), and Internet-based Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) providers as state and local 911 authorities transition to IP-based networks and develop the capability to support NG911 elements and functions. The State 911 Department filed comments with the FCC in that docket. This year on July 18, 2024 the FCC released its final Report and Order. What does the Report and Order do?

[The Report and Order](#) would require originating service providers (OSPs) to transition to NG911 in two phases in response to a request by a state or local 9-1-1 authority.

Phase 1: OSPs, specifically wireline providers, CMRS providers, covered text providers, interconnected VoIP providers and Internet-based TRS providers, must deliver 9-1-1 traffic in IP-based Session Initiation Protocol (SIP) format to delivery points designated by the 9-1-1 authority.

Phase 2: OSPs must deliver 9-1-1 traffic to designated delivery points in an IP based SIP format that supports routing, caller location and transmission of emergency information in accordance with NG911 commonly accepted standards.

The Report and Order also establishes timelines for implementing Phase 1 and Phase 2 and reviews cost recovery mechanisms. In addition, the Report and Order underscores preserving the authority of state and local governments for managing NG911 implementation within their jurisdictions.

Massachusetts and Comtech have struggled to get OSPs to connect via SIP. We are hopeful that this new order helps expedite up the process.

Updates from our Systems Division - Continued

A Statement Regarding the Recent June 18, 2024, Outage (Statement previously sent to the State 911 Commission and all PSAPs)

The State 911 Department remains committed to ensuring you have the most up-to-date information regarding the recent disruption to the 911 system. We understand that many PSAPs have received inquiries from community members and would like to share the most recent information regarding the identified reason for the outage and the steps taken to resolve the matter.

On June 18, 2024, the 911 system's firewall temporarily prevented calls from reaching 911 Public Safety Answer Points (PSAPs). The firewall took this action because it correctly identified anomalies with inbound data management in connection with the way traffic was being routed across the state's network.

The incident was an automated-self-protection response by the firewall to anomalous network traffic behavior. This response deliberately isolated the ability of the network to route data, including calls, between PSAPs and the Next Generation 911 cores, i.e., routers, servers, and switches.

The location of the incident and the triggering event occurred in the Next Generation 911 System, which is not accessible directly from any public network and would require the defeat of multiple security layers first. There was no evidence of this kind of malicious intrusion through those layers.

After the June 18 incident, based on the information known, two immediate measures were taken:

1) Firewall rules were modified to mediate automated network protections, so that security-interruptions can't automatically halt critical traffic. Previously, in rare circumstances, the firewall could interrupt communications if it detected anomalous patterns that closely match issues identified within the data and network security industry as possibly suspect. In this event, these patterns, though not malicious, created a false-positive resulting in a too-aggressive security response.

2) For the immediate future, all updates will be manually tested before implementation.

Lastly, Massachusetts State 911 Department and Comtech are currently conducting a comprehensive review of all policies and procedures.

Updates from MassEDP

Skyview Downtown - Springfield MA

On Thursday, July 18, 2024, Massachusetts Equipment Distribution Program (MasEDP) Field Service Advisor (FSA) Marguerite Szczawinski visited the Skyview Downtown apartments located in Springfield. While there, she educated residents on the different phones that MassEDP offers, the qualifications, and how to apply. Marguerite also educated the seniors on the Silent Call Procedure, and Text-to-911. Thank you to the Skyview Downtown apartments residential service coordinator Ashley Banacourt for acting as a Spanish translator for the residents. A great day was had by all!



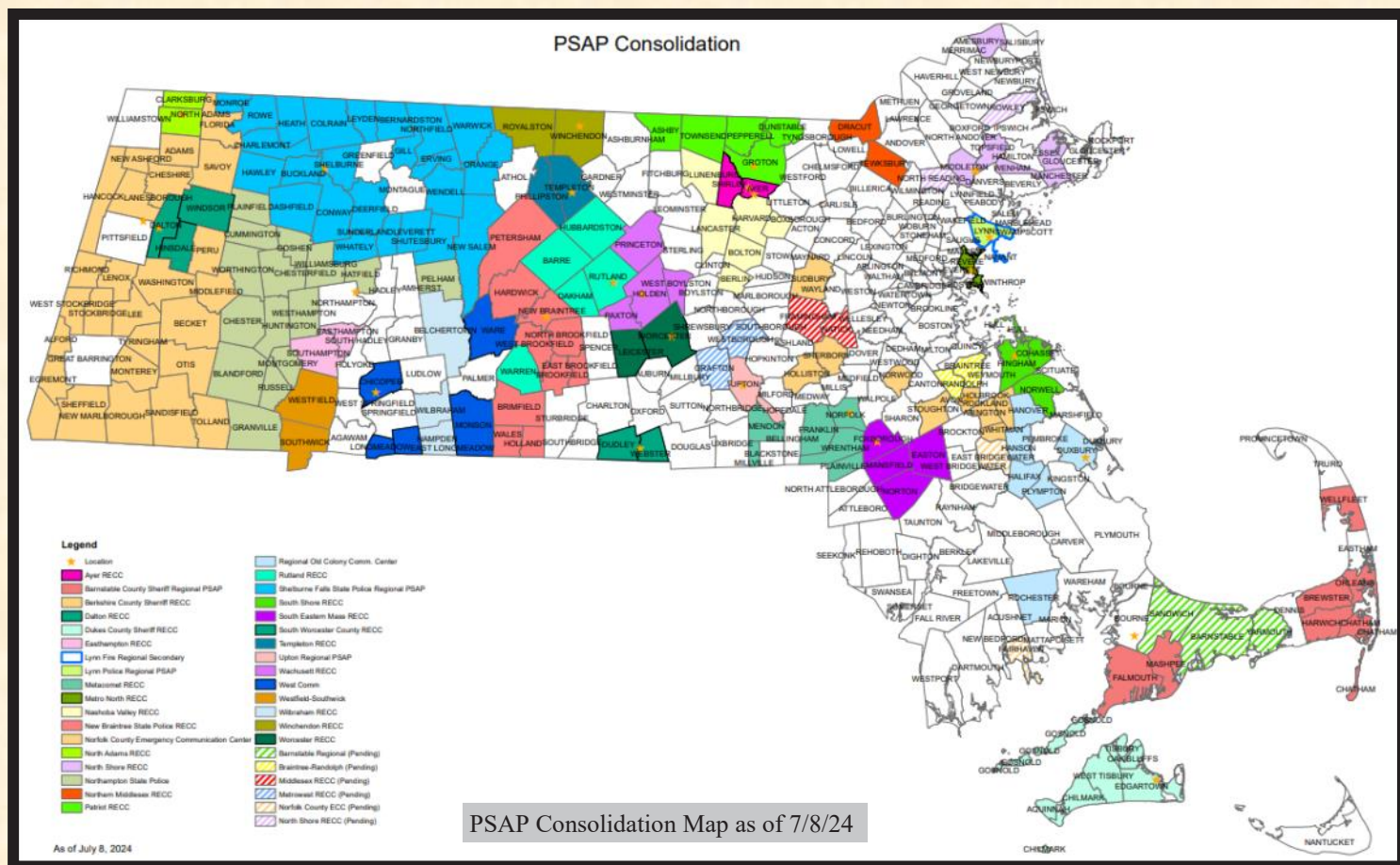
Pictured above: Ashley Banacourt & Marguerite Szczawinski



Regionalization Updates

The following communities have recently signed an IMA, joined a RECC, or created a new RECC:

- Holbrook (Norfolk County Emergency Communications Center):
 - o Fairhaven went live on July 17th.
 - o East Bridgewater signed an IMA to join.
- Framingham/Natick signed an IMA to create the Greater Boston RECC.
- Belchertown went live with Wilbraham RECC.
- Rowley has signed an IMA with North Shore RECC.
- Barnstable, Sandwich, and Yarmouth signed an IMA to create a Regional hosted in Barnstable.



The PSAP consolidation map is available on our website. Click [HERE](#) to view it.

Looking for more information?

If your department is considering branching out into a regional dispatch center but are unsure of where to start, contact Peter Kinnas at Peter.S.Kinnas@mass.gov or (508)821-7213. Our team is ready to meet with you, discuss all possibilities, and provide guidance as you explore your options.



South Eastern Massachusetts Regional Emergency Communications Center (SEMRECC) Outreach

“On Tuesday, July 9, 2024, the Southeastern Massachusetts Regional Emergency Communications Center (SEMRECC) proudly participated in the annual Mansfield Family Fun Night. This event provided a wonderful opportunity for SEMRECC to connect with the community, spread awareness about their vital work, and educate the public on the critical importance of 911 services. Visitors to the SEMRECC table were able to engage with staff, ask questions, and gain valuable insights into how emergency communications operate.”

*~Lindsay Mitchell, Training Section Chief
- SEMRECC*



Pictured above: Communications Officer
Aaron Silva