

TELECOMMUNICATOR TRAINING PROGRAM MANUAL

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Introduction

The Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) has established [administrative rules](#) mandating that all primary Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) throughout the State of Michigan obtain and maintain minimum training standards for each Telecommunicator.

Funding to assist in covering costs for this training is available through Public Act (P.A.) 32 of 1986 to qualified PSAPs that submit an application and follow established funding guidelines. Courses and expenses are approved through a process adopted by the State 911 Committee (SNC). A list of approved courses and eligible expenses can be viewed [here](#).

There are many venues across the State of Michigan interested in providing training to their local PSAPs. This includes, but is not limited to, approved training providers, community colleges, and universities. Some of these training providers are currently offering approved courses, and many are prepared to work with local PSAPs to develop courses tailored to the needs of Michigan PSAPs and the public safety community.

The SNC 911 Training Subcommittee (NTS) presents this revised training manual with the knowledge that future changes will be necessary and intends for this to be a living document. This manual is developed for informational purposes and to address frequently asked questions, and is not a substitute for the MPSC's Administrative Rules.

Legislation

P.A. 78 of 1999, which amended P.A. 32 of 1986, created a telecommunicator training fund. This funding is available through a 5.5% distribution of the state "all device 911 surcharge" (M.C.L. 484.1408 (4)(c)). This act also requires that the courses for which training funds are utilized must go through the appropriate approval process, which is administered through the Michigan State 911 Administrative Office with the approval of the SNC 911 Training Subcommittee.

Expected Costs and Funding

The distribution of training funds is based on the Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) count for each eligible PSAP. The current collection and distribution of training funds provides funding assistance to PSAPs to help cover some of the costs incurred to meet the established mandates. The efficacy of these funds will be re-evaluated as the process moves forward.

Requirements

Minimum telecommunicator training requirements as promulgated by the SNC:

NOTE: Module I and Module II requirements are applicable to any telecommunicator hired on or after December 13, 2012. Telecommunicators hired prior to this date are not required to complete the aforementioned training requirements. Training of telecommunicators in areas such as Emergency Medical Dispatch, LEIN, NIMS, and other federal, state, or locally required training is in addition to Modules I and II and is the responsibility of the employing agency. However, NIMS 100 and 700 may satisfy the Module II Homeland Security requirement (IV)(C)(4)(e).

- A. Module I: A 40-hour basic telecommunicator course consisting of the basic requirements outlined by the rules must:
 - 1. Be completed within 18 months of the date of hire.
 - 2. Consist of a SNC-approved course.
 - 3. Include, at a minimum, the following topics:
 - a. Overview of Public Safety – Police, Fire, and EMS
 - b. Telecommunicator Roles and Responsibilities
 - c. Legal Aspects of Dispatcher Services
 - d. Interpersonal Communications
 - e. Public Safety Technologies
 - f. Telephone Techniques
 - g. Call Classification
 - h. Radio Communications
 - i. Stress Management
 - 4. Module I training should be completed as one (1) 40-hour training course.
- B. Module II: 40 hours of training which must:
 - 1. Be completed within 24 months of the date of hire.
 - 2. Consist of SNC-approved courses.
 - 3. Include eight (8) hours of each of the following topics:
 - a. Domestic Violence
 - b. Suicide Intervention
 - c. 911 Liability
 - d. Stress Management
 - e. Homeland Security Elective
 - 4. Module II training can be completed as one (1) consecutive 40-hour training course or in separate courses consisting of eight (8) hour increments covering each of the above required training topics.
- C. Module III: 24 hours of Continuing Education
 - 1. After successful completion of Modules I and II, all designated telecommunicators are required to attend 24 hours of approved training every 24 months. All SNC approved training can be used for continuing education towards Module III requirements.
 - 2. Internal training includes training that is specific to a primary PSAP. A maximum of eight (8) hours of the 24 hours of continuing education may include internal training. Internal training shall qualify if the training content is directly related to improving one (1) or more of the 26 telecommunicator essential job tasks listed in Appendix A. An annual accounting of the internal training will be provided to the NTS by the PSAP upon request to indicate specific training areas included in the internal training course.
- D. SNC approval is required for all courses for which training funds will be used. The NTS will

review requests for Module I and Module II Endorsements for approval to be added to the training course listing.

- E. **New Hires:** The 24-month continuing education requirements begin after two years of employment, and after successful completion of Modules I and II. The first 24 hours of continuing education is due four years from the date of hire and then every two years following.
- F. **Grandfathered Telecommunicators:** Telecommunicators who were continuously employed by a Michigan primary PSAP for a minimum of 12 months before December 13, 2012, (as referenced in R484.803, Rule 3) will become designated telecommunicators. Continuous employment shall be recognized as no break of employment of more than 30 calendar days. All designated telecommunicators are required to begin 24 hours of continuing education as of December 13, 2012. The first 24 hours of continuing education is due two years from this date and then every two years following.
- G. **Leaves of Absence:** The requirement for 24 hours of continuing education in each 24-month period may be extended if notice of a PSAP-approved leave of absence is provided to the State 911 Administrative Office by the PSAP director for NTS review.
- H. Failure to complete these requirements will result in the telecommunicator becoming undesignated.

Registrations and Notifications

Notification of a leave of absence for any telecommunicator must be provided to the State 911 Administrative Office for any leave which prevents completion of required training.

New hires must set up MiLogin accounts and request access to MiSNAP within 30 days of starting employment. For new employees hired from another PSAP, a search can be done in MiSNAP and the employee can be added by the PSAP director. Telecommunicators who retire, resign, or are terminated will be entered as inactive within 30 days of leaving employment; the PSAP director or designee must add this information in MiSNAP and provide a departure date.

Training course completion must be entered in MiSNAP by the training providers within 30 days of completion. Internal training must be entered in MiSNAP by the PSAP director or their designee within 30 days of completion.

Policies

- A. The telecommunicator classifications of trainee, designated, and delinquent are eligible to perform telecommunicator duties as described in Appendix A. Undesignated telecommunicators are disqualified from performing telecommunicator duties as described in Appendix A.
- B. Designated classification may be maintained as a telecommunicator changes employment from one primary PSAP to another if the lapse in employment by a primary PSAP does not exceed three months. A telecommunicator who takes a leave of absence or leaves employment for a period longer than three months and maintains the continuing education

requirements will retain their designated telecommunicator status when returning to employment.

C. Failure to Comply

1. When the MiSNAP training records indicate an individual employed by a primary PSAP as a telecommunicator has not met the training requirements of these Rules, the State 911 Administrative Office will classify the individual as a delinquent telecommunicator as of the first business day of the following month. At this time, a notification will be sent through MiSNAP to the director of the employing primary PSAP(s).
2. If the telecommunicator has not completed sufficient training to be brought into compliance with these Rules, the employing director must submit a plan of action by the first business day of the month following the delinquency notice, as set forth in (VI)(C)(2); this will indicate the plan to bring the telecommunicator into compliance within six (6) months of the date of the delinquency notification. The plan must be submitted through MiSNAP and will be reviewed by the SNC NTS. The telecommunicator's status will remain delinquent until such time as the required training documentation has been added to MiSNAP. At that time, the telecommunicator's status will be restored to designated. If the required training cannot be documented within six (6) months, the telecommunicator's classification will remain undesignated until the training requirements are met.
3. Failure to respond to the initial delinquency notification by the primary PSAP director or failure to submit a six (6) month plan to bring a delinquent telecommunicator into compliance with these Rules within one (1) month following the delinquency notice will result in the reclassification of the telecommunicator as undesignated, and notification of the classification change will be sent to the director and the appropriate executive personnel through MiSNAP.
4. A report of delinquent or undesignated classifications may be provided to the SNC Certification Subcommittee for potential review for funding/operational issues for those primary PSAPs. A report is provided as part of a PSAP Compliance Review.

D. Exigent Circumstances

1. Nothing in these Rules precludes a primary PSAP director's authority to use whatever reasonable resources are available to perform telecommunicator duties in an emergency or crisis situation of short duration. If a written complaint is received by the NTS that a primary PSAP has used undesignated telecommunicators or other personnel beyond the spirit and intent of this exception, the NTS will review the information and determine whether the use of the personnel was beyond the spirit and intent of this exception. If so, a report of the same will be provided to the Certification Subcommittee.
2. The PSAP director will notify the State 911 Administrative Office Training Analyst of any use of undesignated telecommunicators or other personnel due to exigent circumstances in excess of two hours.

Definitions

- A. Date of Hire – Start date of work as a telecommunicator as documented in the agency's personnel records.
- B. Delinquent Telecommunicator – A delinquent telecommunicator is either of the following:
 - 1. A telecommunicator whose training records on file with the State 911 Administrative Office indicate the individual has not completed Modules I and II within the time period required for trainee telecommunicators, AND notification of the telecommunicator's delinquency status has been sent to the director of the primary PSAP(s) employing the individual, as required by these Rules.
 - 2. A telecommunicator who has not completed all required continuing education AND notification of the telecommunicator's delinquency status has been sent to the director of the primary PSAP(s) employing the individual, as required by these Rules.
- C. Designated telecommunicator – A designated telecommunicator is any person who has completed all of the required training within the required timeframe.
- D. Grandfathered Telecommunicator – A telecommunicator employed by a primary PSAP for a minimum of 12 months before the effective date of the rules, who is exempt from completing Modules I and II but is required to complete 24 hours of continuing education every two years as outlined in R484.805.
- E. Leave of Absence – A leave of absence is defined by the employing agency. The director of the PSAP should use his or her discretion in determining what is or is not an acceptable reason for a leave of absence. However, this should not be abused in order to allow more time for a telecommunicator to complete required training.
- F. Part-time Employee – The definition of a part-time employee is determined by the employing agency. Part-time employees are subject to the same training requirements of the promulgated rules as full-time employees.
- G. Trainee Telecommunicator – A person hired as a telecommunicator less than 12 months before December 13, 2012, or a person hired after the effective date of the Rules who has not yet completed Modules I and II, but is still within the required time period for completion of Modules I and II.
- H. Undesignated Telecommunicator – The SNC will classify a Delinquent Telecommunicator as Undesignated when the telecommunicator's PSAP manager has failed to comply with the provisions of these Rules to correct the telecommunicator's training deficiency.

Appendix A – Telecommunicator Essential Job Tasks

1. Demonstrate clear and effective communications.
2. Process calls for assistance received on all designated communications systems.
3. Accurately record information provided by callers.
4. Question callers to determine location and nature of problem, and accurately classify as an emergency or non-emergency call.
5. Simultaneously perform various tasks while in reception of multiple audio and visual sources (channels, talk groups, monitors, etc.). This includes quickly and effectively answering multiple communications requesting assistance and appropriately prioritizing those requests.
6. Determine in a timely manner, the destination for referral of calls and complete the transfer with confirmation of its reception to the appropriate location. Initiate the call intake process of information needed for immediate dispatch.
7. Identify the most appropriate responding agency and the priority of the call. Locate and dispatch the most appropriate resource in accordance with established response procedures.
8. Document appropriate narrative data for dispatch. Document information received on an "open line" call, and determine whether the open line is a call or a TDD/TTY device. Continue to document traffic from field units and update unit status as appropriate.
9. Identify and communicate scene and responder safety concerns.
10. Provide updates on calls when applicable.
11. Maintain professional voice tone and manage calls/incidents accordingly during emergency and non-emergency situations.
12. Identify and mitigate caller safety concerns.
13. Communicate with callers from various backgrounds and who vary in ethnicity, age, race, gender, and mental abilities, and may be under the influence of alcohol/drugs. Utilize foreign language interpreter service as applicable.
14. Process information from callers who cannot or will not provide appropriate and necessary information to initiate an incident.
15. Receive and process calls transferred or relayed from other agencies.
16. Prioritize pending calls for service. Be cognizant and aware of potential duplicate or related calls.
17. Re-contact callers that are disconnected to determine nature and location of call or event in accordance with local protocol.
18. Operate text, TDD and TTY equipment in order to process calls from hearing or speech impaired individuals in need of service.
19. Possess and maintain knowledge of inter-agency and respective public safety agency policies and procedures.
20. Provide callers with pre-arrival/post-dispatch instructions in accordance with established protocols, policies, and procedures.
21. Refer or process internal complaints and/or requests for repair or service of agency equipment and systems.
22. Process and prioritize various information requests using local, state, federal, and international databases.
23. Receive, document, and disseminate additional requests for information and resources.
24. Disseminate to other agencies pertinent information using various methods of communication.
25. Monitor equipment alarms. Monitor other alarms from outside sources if applicable.
26. Coordinate, document, and track the response of mutual aid resources.
27. Immediately respond to requests for back up units and dispatch according to local protocol.
28. Brief on-coming relief personnel of shift activity and status of units.
29. Obtain and maintain appropriate and required certifications.

Appendix B – Telecommunicator Skills List

Communications:

- Ability to write and type legibly.
- Ability to professionally and accurately communicate both orally and in writing.
- Ability to read and understand written and electronic communication.
- Ability to hear and comprehend information and sounds coming through communications devices.
- Ability to speak with sufficient clarity in person or with a communications device.

Job Performance:

- Ability to maintain composure and handle stressful situations.
- Ability to quickly act in a decisive manner using good judgment.
- Ability to prioritize situations and information quickly and effectively, and make appropriate decisions based on the information received.
- Ability to listen, act, and remain focused during stressful and non-stressful situations.
- Ability to multi-task under a variety of circumstances.
- Ability to maintain a professional demeanor at all times.
- Ability to adapt to new or unique situations.
- Ability to perform work-related requests and directives.
- Ability to learn and apply new information and techniques.
- Ability to testify in court in a professional manner.
- Ability to learn jurisdictional boundaries as well as surrounding geography.
 - Ability to follow directions.
 - Working knowledge of geography and mapping systems.
 - Ability to learn and efficiently use multiple computer and radio systems.

Judgment:

- Ability to respect private and confidential information.
- Ability to recognize when to self-initiate decision making while recognizing when to seek guidance and/or clearance from a supervisor.
- Ability to detach from caller's emotions yet remain empathetic.
- Ability and willingness to accept responsibility for one's actions and decisions.

Relationships with Others:

- Ability to work cooperatively with supervisors and peers.
- Ability to act in a mature and professional manner.
- Ability to work in a team environment and support other team members.
- Ability and willingness to accept criticism without reacting defensively, rationalizing mistakes, or blaming others.
- Ability to adapt to a variety of internal and external work circumstances.

Initiative and Reliability:

- Ability to show initiative in completing job tasks.
- Ability to handle both task and people-oriented duties.
- Ability to evaluate previous incidents in order to improve performance.
- Ability to manage personal stress.

Appendix C – Allowable/Disallowable Usage of Funds for Training

For an updated listing of Allowable/Disallowable Usage of Funds for Training, please access the [SNC's website](#).