



PERQUIMANS COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES

P.O. Box 563 - 159 Creek Drive - Hertford, NC 27944

(252) 426-5646 Phone - (252) 426-3306 Fax

Jonathan A. Nixon, Director

PRESS RELEASE – National Public Safety Telecommunicator Week

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 17, 2021

Contact: Julie M. Solesbee

Phone: 252-426-5646

Since 1981, the second week of April has been designated as National Public Safety Telecommunicator Week. This week is to help recognize the individuals that are rarely seen, but always heard, whether it be by radio or by phone. This chosen path can be a difficult one because they are dealing with callers that can be emotional and frustrated. Telecommunicators must be quick to act, a good listener, patient, and be able to direct the conversation, while remaining calm and attempting to keep the caller calm.

In 2018, our 911 Center became an Emergency Medical Dispatch Center. This means that a Certified EMD Telecommunicator can attempt to give basic medical guidance while on the phone with a caller. It may be something as simple as advising someone to take an Aspirin or use their prescribed inhaler to giving a caller CPR instructions for a patient that is unresponsive. To be a certified Telecommunicator, employees must complete 106 hours which includes the Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) Course, Sheriff's Standards Telecommunicator Course, Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), Division of Criminal Information Training (DCI), and basic Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Courses. Each of these courses also require continuing education on an annual or biennial basis, and some certifications require that every two years, you must retake the course.

Based on the training hours required, you can tell that our Telecommunicators are vital to those that dial 911, but they are also extremely important to our Public Safety personnel. They are our eyes and ears prior to arriving on scene. If a scene does not appear safe, they are making personnel aware. Periodic check ins are also done while crews are on scene, again to make sure that everyone is safe. So, while you may see others in the field, our Telecommunicators are the first line of defense for both our community and Public Safety personnel.

April is also known as 911 National Education Month. It is important for the community to know what to expect when they dial 911. There are certain questions that the Telecommunicators must ask prior to moving forward with the call and that can be frustrating for callers. Did you know that you can text 911? You can, if you are in a situation where you cannot talk, text 911 and one of our Telecommunicators will respond by text. Have you heard about the See Something, Say Something program? This program is designed to help youth anonymously report information that they may hear in school or see on Social Media. It is a program that was designed so that suspicious behavior could be reported early on prior to an event with the goal of protecting our youth.

As part of our educational outreach for in the community, we are excited to announce that in 2020, Vidant Chowan Hospital's Community Benefit Grants Program awarded us funding that has allowed our agency to purchase a 911 Learning Simulator Device. This device has just been received and we are excited to begin offering an interactive experience in the community at different events such as festivals, school functions, along with preschool and group home visits. This experience will allow our staff to educate the community on what a 911 conversation sounds like from beginning to end. It will also help reinforce to youth how important it is to know their address in case of an emergency.

Please join us in thanking our 911 Telecommunicators for their dedication in serving the community as we wrap up National Public Safety Telecommunicator Week.
