

**Luzerne County
Training and Quality Assurance Program Review**

PSAP General Information

Luzerne County is a Third Class County with 76 municipalities supporting a population of approximately 320,918 residents. In 2013, the 9-1-1 Center handled a total of approximately 219,188 9-1-1 calls. A total of 155,108 or approximately 70 percent of these calls were wireless.

Training and Quality Assurance Review Background

On August 22, 2014, a Training and Quality Assurance review was conducted to ensure Luzerne County's compliance with Chapter 53, Emergency Telephone Service, of Title 35 of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, 35 P.S. § 5303, *et seq.*, and the Public Safety Emergency Telephone Program regulations, 4 Pa. Code §120b; Training and Certification Standards for 9-1-1 Emergency Communications Personnel, 4 Pa. Code §120c; and Performance Review and Quality Assurance Standards, 4 Pa. Code §120d. Guidelines for the review were taken from the Act and the above referenced sections of the Pa. Code and were known and available to Luzerne County prior to the inception of the review.

The Training and Quality Assurance programs are designed to facilitate the learning process for 9-1-1 communications personnel and provide a framework for the continuous improvement of the overall operation of 9-1-1 communications centers in the Commonwealth. Training and Quality Assurance programs work collaboratively to provide the best possible emergency communications service to citizens of the Commonwealth. A review of both programs was conducted to detect any trends and to ensure compliance with statutory requirements.

Luzerne County 9-1-1 Training Program

The Training and Quality Assurance Program sections of the Luzerne County 9-1-1 Triennial Plan and Telecommunicator certifications were reviewed for compliance prior to the site visit. Currently, our records indicate the county has 58 full-time Telecommunicators and 8 Shift Leaders.

4 Pa. Code §120c.104 - 106 requires a minimum of 184 hours of training to qualify for certification in call-taking and emergency dispatching. Luzerne County telecommunications personnel receive approximately 800 hours of academic and 9-1-1 Center training upon completion of the training program. In addition, Telecommunicators receive periodic follow-up reviews their last month of training. Luzerne County exceeds training standards established in 4 Pa. Code §120c.104 - 106. All records are standardized, complete for documentation, and kept on line with a backup file located in the 9-1-1 Training and Education Manager's office.

4 Pa. Code §120c.108 (e) requires Telecommunicators be trained by Pennsylvania Department of Health approved contractors who provide instructors to conduct Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) training of 9-1-1 communications personnel. The county utilizes EMD protocols provided by the Association of Public Safety Communications Officials, International (APCO, Intl.) and all 66 Telecommunicator certifications are current. Luzerne County meets the standards established in 4 Pa. Code §120c.108 (e).

Continuing education is provided monthly to all personnel in the communications center to promote and re-emphasize areas of training. In addition to the required continuing education requirements mandated by the EMD protocol provider, emergency management and other training specific to the region is accomplished on a regular basis. Continuing education records are kept on line with a backup file located in the 9-1-1 Training and Education Manager's office.

State and local governments are responsible for providing effective communication and equal access to 9-1-1 and other emergency services pursuant to Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), 42 U.S.C. §§ 12101 *et seq.*, as amended. To achieve effective communication and equal access to 9-1-1, services should be made available, when feasible, to people with hearing and speech disabilities who utilize communications technologies other than standard telephones or TDD/TTYs. Such services may employ personal digital assistants (PDAs) or other wireless technologies. The Luzerne County Emergency Communications Center has TTY equipment accessible at all communications stations. As part of continuing education, random test calls are performed on a scheduled basis within the 9-1-1 communication center.

Luzerne County Quality Assurance Program

PEMA 9-1-1 Office staff reviewed Luzerne County 9-1-1 Quality Assurance files for discrepancies. All records are standardized, documented and kept on line with a backup file located in the 9-1-1 Training and Education Manager's office.

4 Pa. Code §120d.104 (a) and (b) sets requirements for timeframes and procedures for conducting quality assurance reviews. Those 9-1-1 Communications Centers and remote dispatch points that average more than 72 emergency dispatch calls per day shall perform a review of a minimum of 2 percent of the emergency calls received per week. In addition, all incidents involving catastrophic loss shall be included in the quality assurance review process. Luzerne County reviews approximately 90 or 2.1 percent of the emergency dispatched calls per week. Luzerne County exceeds the standards established in 4 Pa. Code §120d.104 (a) and (b).

4 Pa. Code §120d.104 (c) requires that twice a year, the quality assurance reviewer will review a segment of each Telecommunicator's radio activity in order to determine adherence to the 9-1-1 communications center's dispatch standards. At a minimum, each segment of the Telecommunicator's radio activity that is monitored shall contain 3 emergency dispatched calls. Luzerne County completes 6 radio reviews for each Telecommunicator per year. Luzerne County meets the standards established in 4 Pa. Code §120d.104 (c).

4 Pa. Code §120d.104 (d) requires that quality assurance reviewers be designated by the Director of each 9-1-1 communications center or remote dispatch point and be at a supervisory level with a minimum of 3 years experience in the field of emergency Telecommunications. The Quality Assurance staff consists of Quality Assurance Manager with over 10 years' experience. Luzerne County exceeds the standards established in 4 Pa. Code §120d.104 (d).

4 Pa. Code §120d.104 (e) provides that the date selected for a quality assurance review will not exceed 5 days prior to the review. Telecommunicators shall receive the results of their quality assurance review within 5 days of the review. Luzerne County meets the standards established in 4 Pa. Code, §120d.104 (e).

Luzerne County Protocols

Call-taking and dispatch protocols are tools for a communications center, providing a consistent form of guidance to the Telecommunicator during the emergency dispatch process. Luzerne County currently utilizes EMD protocols provided by the Association of Public Safety Communications Officials, International (APCO, Intl.) and locally developed police and fire protocols.

Conclusion

The Training and Quality Assurance Program Review found that the Luzerne County Emergency Services 9-1-1 Training and Quality Assurance Programs are aligned with Chapter 53, Emergency Telephone Service, of Title 35 of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, 35 P.S. § 5303, *et seq.*, and the Public Safety Emergency Telephone Program regulations, 4 Pa. Code §120b, Training and Certification Standards for 9-1-1 Emergency Communications Personnel, 4 Pa. Code §120c, and Performance Review and Quality Assurance Standards, 4 Pa. Code §120d.