



Frequently Asked Questions

Emergency Communications careers are fast-paced, diverse, and rewarding. Telecommunicators are committed to strengthening communities by helping ensure public safety, protect property, facilitate response efforts, elicit cooperation, instill public confidence, and help families reunite.

General Information

Q: Why be a 9-1-1 Telecommunicator?

A: A career as a 9-1-1 Telecommunicator is fast-paced, diverse, and above all else, rewarding. As a part of a chain of emergency responders, 9-1-1 Telecommunicators are the face—or rather the ears—of emergency calls to 9-1-1 and radio communications with first responders in the field. It takes a remarkable person to do 9-1-1 work! One who can be personable and calm while gathering information, giving instructions, deploying other resources as well as being accurate and efficient all at the same time!

Q: What are the job responsibilities of a 9-1-1 Telecommunicator?

A: Primary duties are to receive and process incoming Fire and Police Departments emergency 9-1-1 and non-emergency calls and promptly dispatch appropriate units to the scene, providing pre-arrival instructions to callers, and communicating with field responders via radio transmissions, monitoring all apparatus movement to stay abreast of their locations at all times to ensure the timeliest emergency responses.

The 9-1-1 Telecommunicators will answer many calls and be required to determine the nature of the emergency while keeping the caller calm, if necessary. This includes choosing a call's priority so that the most serious situations are attended to first. Contacts are primarily with the public via telephone and first responders in the field via radio communications for the purpose of responding to emergency and non-emergency requests for assistance and information.

A 9-1-1 Telecommunicator will need to provide the caller with information or instructions, such as guiding a caller through cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) or other life-saving first aid actions. Simultaneously, the role will need to alert the correct emergency service (Police or Fire) for dispatch to the emergency site with details for responding units. Finally, a 9-1-1 Telecommunicator must record the information accurately and efficiently.

Q: Can the job duties and responsibility be stressful?

A: Yes, the role may be considered stressful as the position requires assisting callers during emergencies and supporting callers and responding units during emergencies and crises. The Department of Emergency Communications recognizes the importance of 9-1-1 telecommunicators mental health and the need for self-care. The department provides activities, resources and tools to employees to help alleviate stresses. This includes in creating a work environment focused on collaboration and cohesiveness.

Q: What skills and attributes should a candidate possess?

A: Applicants who possess strong multi-tasking skills – typing, listening and communicating at the same time, good judgement, ability to make decisions quickly, provide instructions, de-





escalate and keep callers calm. These skills combined with extensive on the job training would be used to perform daily job duties and resolve most work problems.

Q: How do I know if I have the skills, attributes and experience needed for the position?

A: No 9-1-1 telecommunicator experience is necessary. On-the-job training is extensive. All applicants will take a pre-hire CritiCall test during the initial hiring phase on their skills aptitude for 9-1-1 telecommunicator.

Some examples of previous work history that contain some of the skills needed include: working a drive-through window processing multiple orders for a variety of customers via an ordering system, high volume retail and cashier, a phone operator or high impact call center, using radio dispatch to communicate with teams, and any other work dealing with high demand customer service, telecommunication, or high stress environments. If you have any questions, please contact [DEC HR](#)).

Q: What is the CritiCall test?

A: CritiCall is a pre-hire exam that is proctored online and evaluates specific skills needed for 9-1-1 Telecommunicators. Test simulation focuses on skills needed to succeed in these positions:

- Decision-Making - knowledge and ability to send the right emergency service to any given incident.
- Data Entry - ability to enter accurate data under time pressure and while responding to emergency messages.
- Map Reading practice - ability to read maps, calculate routes and follow directions.
- Call Summarization practice - ability to pay attention to audio recordings, summarize them and answer relevant questions correctly.
- Cross-Referencing, Spelling, Character Checking, Mathematics, Memory Recall, Prioritization, Reading Comprehension, Sentence Clarity and Typing

Q: What are the work/education requirements of the job?

A: No experience is necessary. Applicant requirements:

- High School Diploma or equivalent
- At least 18 years old at time of application.
- Must be able to type 30 words per minute.
- Be legally authorized to work for any employer within the United States.
- Pass CritiCall testing standards
- Must successfully pass a Criminal Background, Psychological, Medical and Drug screening
 - Ability to obtain and maintain Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) clearance and Level 1 - CJIS Security & Awareness Certification.
 - May NOT have any felony convictions.
 - May NOT have any misdemeanor arrests within the last 5 years with some misdemeanor convictions that will not qualify regardless of when it occurred.

Some college related courses or minimum 1-year experience within Emergency Communications, Call Center or Associate Degree in public safety, communications, information systems, business administration or related field preferred.





Q: How can I prepare for the CritiCall Job Simulation Test?

A: There are online resources to assist you. CritiCall provides sample tests online. Additionally, an applicant can practice their typing with many free online typing tests. To improve typing speeds, spending 15-30 minutes a day for two weeks begins to show improvement. Below are links to a CritiCall sample test and a free typing test option as preparation examples.

- [CritiCall Sample Test](#)
- [Typing Test Practice](#)
- [WikiHow Typing Speed Improvement](#)

Q: What does the background check include?

A: The background check verifies a variety of things, including employment history, education, criminal history such as existing felonies, misdemeanors, and illegal activity. The following are verified:

- SSN Address Trace
- County Criminal Record Search (Felony & Misdemeanor)
- Federal Criminal (Felony & Misdemeanor)
- Statewide Criminal
- County Civil
- Federal Civil Search
- National Criminal / Sex & Violent Offender Search
- Education Verification
- Employment History Verification

Q: Will I need to be fingerprinted?

A: Yes. This position requires all applicants meet the highest level of security with the State of Wisconsin Department of Justice to view criminal justice information while performing their duties as a 9-1-1 Telecommunicator. Fingerprints are required after the preliminary background check is completed. Applicants will be notified when to schedule their fingerprints with the City of Milwaukee Police Department. Applicants will need to bring their valid Driver or state ID on their scheduled appointment.

Q: What is the salary?

A: See specific job announcement for the wage rate (resident incentive included). The [salary ordinance](#) can also be reviewed for the job title.

Q: What kind and how much training is involved?

A: Emergency Communication 9-1-1 Telecommunicator Trainee (ECTT) will attend Emergency Communications 4 to 5-week in-house training program and up to 200 hours of Emergency Communication Center (ECC) on-the-job training with live 9-1-1 and non-emergency call environment (training time could be reduced and extended based on the skill level of the employee but should not be less than 200 hours unless previous 9-1-1 experience). The ECTT is expected to meet all outlined competencies and other requirements defined in the training program, including but not limited to obtaining emergency medical dispatch (EMD) certifications and pass all required exams with a score of 80% or higher.

Q: What are the benefits and where may I find more information?

A: Please visit the [City of Milwaukee](#) website.





The City of Milwaukee offers a comprehensive benefits program that includes the following:

- Defined Benefit Pension Plan
- 457 Deferred Compensation Plan
- Health and Dental Insurance
- Comprehensive Wellness Program
- Onsite Clinic Services
- Onsite Employee Assistance Program
- Alternative Work Schedules
- Long Term Disability Insurance
- Group Life Insurance
- Tuition Benefits
- Paid Vacation
- 11 Paid Holidays
- Paid Sick Leave and other paid leaves

Schedule

Q: Is there more money for working night shift and weekends?

A: Yes. In addition to the base rate of pay, there are shift differentials based on the shift and weekend schedule.

Q: What is the work schedule?

A: New hire trainees, may be assigned different shifts weekly during the 8 -10 weeks of training to include all shift schedules. A trainee should anticipate having a different schedule every week and working all shifts at least once during training.

Current shift structures include 07:30 -15:30; 15:30 – 23:30; 23:30 – 07:30 or some variation of 8-hour shifts.

Will I have to work weekends? Holidays? Overtime?

The position requires rotating days off schedule, with weekends and holidays required. Overtime is assigned as needed to cover minimum staffing.

Q: Is there a different schedule during initial job training?

A: Yes. Trainees may be assigned different shifts weekly during the 8 -10 weeks of training to include all shift schedules. A trainee should anticipate having a different schedule every week and working all shifts at least once during training. Current shift structures include 07:30 -15:30; 15:30 – 23:30; 23:30 – 07:30 or some variation of 8-hour shifts.

