



Charleston County News Release

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9-1-1 Center Takes Major Step Toward Full Consolidation

Charleston County Consolidated 9-1-1 Center pool handles law, fire and medical calls

On Jan. 4, 2010, the [Charleston County Consolidated 9-1-1 Center](#) took another major step toward full consolidation. After extensive cross training of former Sheriff's Office and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) dispatchers and technology changes, a pool of call takers began receiving law, fire and medical calls.

"This change puts the Consolidated 9-1-1 Center one step closer to being a truly consolidated center," said Charleston County 9-1-1 Center Director Jim Lake. "It also allows for more efficient use of personnel and allows them to focus on their primary areas of responsibility."

Prior to the change, calls for the Sheriff's Office would go to one set of dispatchers and calls for EMS and fire would go to another. These dispatchers often juggled gathering information from the caller while providing that information over the radio to responders.

"This manner of operation created some confusion and inefficiency," Lake said.

Now, a pool call taker receives a call, determines if it is a law, fire or medical event (or any combination of the three) and asks questions using a computer program designed specifically to address each type of incident. While the call taker gathers information, a computer generated incident report is sent to a dispatcher who is assigned to talk to law, fire or medical responders via radio.

This efficiency allows the call taker to remain on the line with the caller to gather more information and to provide additional scene safety and/or medical instructions while responders are being sent by the dispatcher.

This change also eliminates some of the delay and potential for lost calls caused by transferring.

Previously, a Sheriff's Office dispatcher would receive a 9-1-1 call for medical services and then have to transfer that call to an EMS dispatcher sitting across the room.

According to Lake, the public may notice two slight changes when calling 9-1-1.

When callers dial 9-1-1 for law, fire or medical services, they will be asked more questions than in the past. These questions are designed to address the health and safety of the caller and those who are responding.

"This does not delay the response because a dispatcher is sending help while the call taker is speaking with the caller," Lake said.

Also, if a caller contacts the Charleston County Sheriff's Office or Charleston County EMS on an administrative line, the call taker will now answer "Charleston County Emergency Services" as opposed to identifying the Sheriff's Office or EMS. The caller will still receive the same service as before this change.

The Charleston County Consolidated 9-1-1 Center currently dispatches for:

- [Charleston County Sheriff's Office](#)
- [Charleston County Emergency Medical Services](#)
- [Charleston County Volunteer Rescue Squad](#)
- [Awendaw Fire Department](#)
- Dewee's Island Fire Department
- [Lincolville Police & Fire Departments](#)
- St. Pauls Fire Department

The 9-1-1 Center is expected to be completely consolidated by 2012, and the following agencies will transition into the center over the next three years:

- Charleston [Police](#) & [Fire](#) Departments
- [Folly Beach Public Safety](#)
- Isle of Palms [Police](#) & [Fire](#) Departments
- [James Island PSD Fire Department](#)
- Mount Pleasant [Police](#) & [Fire](#) Departments
- [North Charleston Police & Fire Departments](#)
- [Saint Andrews Fire Department](#)
- [St. Johns Fire Department](#)
- Sullivan's Island [Police](#) & [Fire](#) Departments

For more information regarding the Charleston County Consolidated 9-1-1 Center and Consolidated Dispatch Board, visit <http://www.charlestoncounty.org/departments/dispatch/index.htm>.