e-COMMUNIQUÉ

E-Comm 9-1-1
Helping to Save Lives and Protect Property

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West Vancouver Police Department (WVPD) dispatchers are visiting E-Comm's communications centre to "double-plug" in the lead-up to the October transition. Left to right: E-Comm police call-taker Rhonda Araki and WVPD dispatcher Sandy Nowacki.

West Vancouver police to move dispatch to E-Comm

The West Vancouver Police Department (WVPD) recently announced it will relocate its dispatch operations to E-Comm in October. In making his announcement, Chief Peter Lepine said the move will lower risks and provide critical operational benefits to WVPD such as increased staffing.

"Emergency dispatch and call-taking are the essential links between the public's call for help and emergency-service response," said Lepine. "This move will provide improved safety for our officers and the public because we're gaining robust technical and operational systems and processes, a back-up facility, and most important, more staff to handle 9-1-1 calls when there are major events in West Vancouver."

WVPD managed almost nine-thousand 9-1-1 calls in 2011.

WVPD's decision followed a two-year analysis by senior staff who examined a number of options for dispatch including maintaining the service within the department. The analysis concluded that by joining E-Comm there would be major gains to be made in terms of risk mitigation, sustainability, and cost savings, now and into the future. The West Vancouver Police Board endorsed the transition to E-Comm at its June 27, 2012 meeting.

By partnering with E-Comm, WVPD will be able to work even more closely with any of the other police agencies dispatched by E-Comm, including the neighbouring Vancouver Police Department and the Squamish RCMP. The size and scope of the E-Comm centre means that when there is a major event in a community that one of these agencies serves, E-Comm can draw from its large contingent of highly-trained staff and quickly re-deploy resources to help manage the increase in 9-1-1 calls. This provides an increased level of service an individual agency would be hard-pressed to achieve on its own.

> **"We believe this new partnership will be just as successful as our first, and address the risks we faced in sustaining dispatch over the long term."**
>
> *West Vancouver Police Chief Peter Lepine*

In addition, the E-Comm partnership model allows for the cost of technology, training and infrastructure to be shared among agencies. Consolidation of many different police services, including dispatch, to gain operational and financial efficiencies is becoming more common within the policing community.

"WVPD first partnered with E-Comm in 2007 when we joined E-Comm's shared wide-area radio system that connects police, fire and ambulance agencies across Metro Vancouver," Lepine added. "We believe this new partnership will be just as successful as our first, and address the risks we faced in sustaining dispatch over the long term."

"We are very proud to be entering into a new partnership with West Vancouver police and serving this progressive and diverse community," said David Guscott, E-Comm president and CEO. "We're focused on helping to create safer communities in B.C. through excellence in public-safety communication, and believe that consolidating dispatch operations is a key element in achieving that vision."

West Vancouver Fire & Rescue to join E-Comm radio system

West Vancouver Fire Chief Jim Cook (left) visited the E-Comm communications centre in the spring for a tour with President & CEO David Guscott (right).

The North Shore will have complete radio interoperability between all police, fire and ambulance services when West Vancouver Fire & Rescue joins E-Comm's wide-area radio system in September.

West Vancouver will be the 11th fire agency to join E-Comm's radio network that spans the Lower Mainland and Fraser Valley, including the North Vancouver City Fire Department and the District of North Vancouver Fire and Rescue Services.

"The transition of West Vancouver fire services to the E-Comm radio system will achieve our long-term goal of interoperability with other public-safety agencies on the North Shore including our neighbouring fire departments," says West Vancouver Fire Chief Jim Cook. "Working co-operatively with our partners on a robust communication system will provide a safer work environment for our staff and enhance the quality of service that we provide to the community."

Having more agencies on the radio system not only improves response efficiencies across municipal borders, it also provides cost benefits to existing agencies on the system through E-Comm's shared costing model.

"There are high demands placed on our partners and our radio system helps them carry out the most effective response possible," says David Guscott, E-Comm president & CEO. "Firefighters in West Vancouver are dedicated to public safety, and E-Comm is committed to providing them with the clear, reliable and broad radio coverage they need to do their jobs. We're proud to be partnering with West Vancouver Fire & Rescue to create a safer community, which is the vision we have for every area we serve." (To read more about E-Comm's Vision 2020 visit **ecomm911.ca**.)

E-Comm's Wireless Services team has been hard at work with partners at West Vancouver Fire & Rescue to prepare for the transition, slated for September 26.

E-Comm celebrates 10th anniversary of fire dispatch service

E-Comm Fire Dispatcher Cindy McDougall took the first fire call on July 2, 2002.

July marked the 10th anniversary of the first group of fire agencies partnering with E-Comm for their dispatch services.

On July 2, 2002, E-Comm took its first fire call for Vancouver Fire & Rescue Services for the "smell of propane or gas from outside." Vancouver Fire had been dispatching for fire agencies from Port Moody, the Sunshine Coast and Whistler so it brought these agencies along with it in the transition to E-Comm.

After the first fire departments came onboard in 2002, E-Comm has since transitioned Richmond Fire-Rescue, Delta Fire & Emergency Services, New Westminster Fire and Rescue Services, Squamish Fire Rescue, Britannia Beach Fire, Pemberton Fire, Birken Fire, and Egmont and District Fire Department onto its dispatch services.

Not only has the number of agencies that have partnered with E-Comm for fire dispatch grown, but so have the technologies that help firefighters operate more effectively.

"E-Comm's model of regional, multi-service consolidated dispatch operations significantly enhances public-safety operations during a major disaster or large-scale public incident," said Dave Mitchell, E-Comm's director of Fire Services. "It's also cost-effective for fire agencies to pool together resources to invest in top-tier technologies and infrastructure."

In 2008, E-Comm fire dispatch transitioned to Intergraph Computer-Aided Dispatch (ICAD) with an advanced mapping system. Along with it came an interactive computerized fire-hall alerting system (Locution) which enables dispatchers to simultaneously dispatch numerous fire calls.

Firefighters on the road also gained access to mobile workstations, GPS location systems and a records management system called Project FIRES. E-Comm along with its partner fire departments in Vancouver and Richmond originally established Project FIRES in 2005 to create a cost-effective, coordinated records management system for fire departments that houses data related to incidents, property, inspections, preventative maintenance, equipment, permits, and personnel. This kind of shared data helps improve response to fire-related events and overall firefighter safety.

Along with the new ICAD system came the Gold Fax, or "rip and runs." This allows dispatchers to send information and hazard warnings directly to fire halls via fax that firefighters can grab when being dispatched to respond to a call.

E-Comm supports national efforts for increased public-safety broadband

Efforts to have Industry Canada dedicate a spectrum of wireless network for public safety use are making great headway nationally, and E-Comm has a prominent seat at the discussion table.

Public Safety Minister Vic Toews announced in May that 10 MHz of spectrum in the 700 MHz band—which became available after television broadcasting migrated from analog to digital—will be dedicated to wireless broadband services for use by emergency responders.

"As broadband and smart phones become more used among the public—like with the Stanley Cup hockey riot—the role of the 9-1-1 centre and dispatchers in collecting information will expand."

Mike Webb,
E-Comm vice-president of
Technology Services

E-Comm and other partners across the country continue to advocate that an additional 10 MHz of spectrum (for a total of 20) be allocated for public safety use in order to provide sufficient capacity for major emergency events. Dedicated spectrum is needed so first responders aren't competing with the public when sending vital communications over the network during emergencies and day-to-day operations.

"As broadband and smart phones become more used among the public—like with the Stanley Cup hockey riot—the role of the 9-1-1 centre and dispatchers in collecting information will expand," says Mike Webb, E-Comm vice-president of Technology Services.

Public-safety broadband services will allow firefighters, police and paramedics to transmit large amounts of data such as video files at high speed over long distances. Availability of the additional 10 MHz will also lessen the potential for communications failures during peak emergency periods, such as the Celebration of Light, and will enable interoperable cross-border communications with emergency responders in the United States.

The Canadian Interoperability Technology Interest Group (CITIG), in partnership with E-Comm and Emergency Management BC, will be hosting regional interoperability workshops in October in three B.C. locations: Vancouver, Victoria and Kamloops. The workshops will help build awareness and understanding of public safety communications interoperability programs and projects underway in B.C., elsewhere in Canada and internationally, including the 700 MHz broadband initiative.

The sessions are open to any representative from public safety, responder or emergency management agencies, government, NGOs, utility, industry and academia interested in furthering CITIG's and E-Comm's goals of improving communications interoperability. E-Comm will be co-hosting the Vancouver session on October 22. Follow **@ecomm911_info**, **@CITIG_Canada**, and **#CITIG_BC** on Twitter or see **www.citig.ca** for more news of the session.

E-Comm expands fire-technology services on Vancouver Island

Saanich Fire Chief Michael Burgess in Saanich's dispatch centre, which is backed up by E-Comm.

"Your commitment and dedication to this project was exceptional and is truly appreciated."

Saanich Fire Chief Michael Burgess

E-Comm dispatch technology partner, Saanich Fire, successfully transitioned two fire departments into its centre at the end of May: the City of Colwood and the Town of View Royal. That means those departments now also have access to the Intergraph CAD fire dispatch system and Project FIRES records management system, hosted and accessed remotely through E-Comm via its Application Service Provider (ASP) model. They also now have E-Comm as their back-up centre as E-Comm provides that service to Saanich Fire.

"We are extremely proud to expand our partnership with Saanich and their dispatch partners," says Dave Mitchell, E-Comm's director of Fire Services. "This is another very positive step for E-Comm's *Vision 2020* strategic plan and the goals and initiatives that fall under service expansion."

This transition means that Colwood and View Royal are now able to benefit from using these top-tier systems and services while maintaining their own local communications and dispatch centre on the Island. Saanich Fire Chief Michael Burgess says teams from both the respective fire departments and E-Comm worked cooperatively and diligently to ensure a seamless transition.

"Your commitment and dedication to this project was exceptional and is truly appreciated," Chief Burgess said.

Colwood Mayor Carol Hamilton echoed those comments.

"Well done to all of those working on this seamless transfer of service," she said. "We appreciate your expertise and it is good to know that our citizens are in good hands!"

Saanich Fire joins Coquitlam Fire, which also takes advantage of E-Comm's ASP model using Intergraph FireCAD and Project FIRES.

E-Comm's 2012-2013 Board of Directors

E-Comm shareholders appointed the new board of directors at the June annual general meeting.

Jocelyn Kelley, Independent Director, Board Chair

Dr. Penny Ballem, Vancouver

Helen Blackburn, Independent Director

Mayor Mike Clay, Independent police boards

Mayor Ernie Daykin, Maple Ridge, Pitt Meadows

Rebecca Denlinger, Ministry of Justice

Councillor Diana Dilworth, Coquitlam, Port Moody, Port Coquitlam, New Westminster, Belcarra

Councillor Charlie Fox, Surrey, White Rock, Township of Langley

Len Garis, Surrey, White Rock, Township of Langley

Mayor Lois Jackson, Delta

Michael MacDougall, Emergency Health Services (BCAS)

Ernie Malone, RCMP

Councillor Bill McNulty, Richmond

Mayor Darrell Mussatto, West Vancouver, District of North Vancouver, City of North Vancouver

Clayton Pecknold, Ministry of Justice

Bob Rolls, Vancouver Police Board

Sheldon Stoilen, Independent Director

Glenn Wong, Independent Director

E-Comm in the Community

Pride Parade
E-Comm's 9-1-1 ambassador, ALI, spread cheer and important safety messages at the Pride Parade in downtown Vancouver Aug. 5 alongside his Vancouver police partners.

Golden Spike Days
E-Comm hosted a booth at Port Moody's Golden Spike Days festival during the Canada Day weekend to help teach children about 9-1-1 and answer questions from grown-ups too.

The Port Moody Police Department also attended the festival.

Lower Mainland Local Government Association (LMLGA) conference
E-Comm helped sponsor the LMLGA conference in Whistler May 9 to 11. The conference brought together local government leaders from across Metro Vancouver, Squamish and Whistler areas.

E-Comm service by the numbers*

April – June 2012

* E-Comm is now reporting 9-1-1 call volumes using TELUS data to avoid duplication of call counts in some circumstances (e.g. when multiple transfers occur). The new database replaces the aging GENESIS system used by Metro Vancouver.
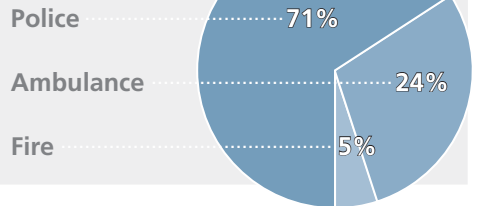
9-1-1- service levels

	9-1-1 calls placed to E-Comm	Service level*
April - June	230,573	98%

* Service Level Target: 95% of all 9-1-1 calls answered in five seconds or less.

Number of 9-1-1 calls from landlines and cell phones

	Landline Telephones		Cellular Telephones	
April - June	74,373	32%	156,200	68%

9-1-1 call directed to police, fire and ambulance

Police 71%

Ambulance 24%

Fire 5%

Technology
9-1-1 uptime: 100%

System grade of service and availability*

2012	System air time (secs)	Transmissions (#)	System availability avg.	System grade of service avg.
April - June	110,663,666	28,942,770	99.9984%	0.0333%

*Grade of service represents the ability of the radio system to handle radio traffic volume. Industry Canada sets the standard for the public-safety community, which is 3%. This means at the radio system's busiest times, there cannot be more than 3% queuing (responders waiting to speak). The E-Comm radio system is well within this standard.

E-Comm mission
To deliver exceptional emergency communication services that help save lives and protect property, and to advance public-safety partnerships.

E-Comm vision
Safer communities in British Columbia through excellence in public-safety communication.

E-Comm values
Respect, Accountability, Integrity, Service, Collaboration

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