

# e-COMMUNIQUE

E-Comm Newsletter Winter 2014, No.42

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

Helping to Save Lives and Protect Property

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*Fire Chief Andrew Oliver with Captain Bob Allan moments after Lions Bay Fire-Rescue's transition to the E-Comm radio system.*

## Complete interoperability for Sea-to-Sky Corridor

On October 30 Lions Bay Fire-Rescue (LBFR) transitioned onto E-Comm's Wide-Area Radio Network, resulting in enhanced communication between police, fire and ambulance personnel responding to emergencies along the southern section of the Sea-to-Sky corridor. The official cutover

took place at 1800hrs and marked the beginning of a partnership that provides LBFR with the ability to communicate seamlessly with surrounding agencies during mutual-aid events.

By joining the regional radio system LBFR will now be able to take advantage of the full range of interoperability with their mutual-aid fire partners on the North Shore, and utilize the combined events talk groups with BC Ambulance Service. Lions Bay is a pre-recruit volunteer fire department that provides training for new firefighters looking to gain experience and work toward full-time employment. The benefits of being on the E-Comm radio system means their department is now able to provide a higher level of service for both local residents and firefighters.

"This new partnership with E-Comm has taken us to the next level in our response times and our capacity to better meet the needs of the general public for our pre-recruit volunteer fire department," says Fire Chief Andrew Oliver, Lions Bay Fire-Rescue.

*Continued on next page >>*



The benefits of shared communications were apparent just minutes following the transition. At 1807hrs firefighters were dispatched for a motor vehicle incident on the Sea-to-Sky Highway. Neighbouring fire department West Vancouver Fire & Rescue (WVFR), which is also on the E-Comm radio system, jointly responded with LBFR.

"West Vancouver Fire & Rescue Services is very pleased that the Lions Bay fire department has joined the E-Comm radio system,"

said WVFR Chief Jim Cook. "Our longstanding relationship with Lions Bay will be significantly enhanced with a shared radio system that provides reliable and seamless interoperability with our mutual-aid partner. I can say without reservation that their investment in the E-Comm radio system will provide many benefits to their community now, and well into the future."

**"This new partnership with E-Comm has helped take us to the next level in our response times and our capacity to better meet the needs of the general public..."**

***Fire Chief Andrew Oliver,  
Lions Bay Fire-Rescue***

Lions Bay is the 12th fire department to join the E-Comm radio system. West Vancouver Fire & Rescue transitioned onto the network in 2012 and the City and District of North Vancouver fire services have been on since 2007 and 2011. BC Ambulance Service has been using the radio network since 2000.

"This is an important step in our ongoing commitment to shared emergency communications," said Peter Gauthier, director of Wireless Services, E-Comm. "We're proud to partner with Lions Bay Fire-Rescue to help create a safer community for their firefighters and residents."

Lions Bay has 25 volunteer firefighters, three fire apparatus, one station and one training facility. They serve the residents of the Village of Lions Bay but also respond to incidents along the Sea-to-Sky-Highway, a 50-kilometre section of HWY 99 from West Vancouver to Britannia Beach that generates 75% of the department's call volume.

# Message from leadership



President & CEO David Guscott

Many exciting and significant projects are well underway as we kick off 2014.

We're proud to have been one of four pilot locations for Text with 9-1-1 services for the Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing and Speech-Impaired community and were very pleased when Canadian wireless carriers completed implementation of the required technology by the CRTC deadline of January 24. We are now working diligently to implement the service by late spring (please see page 6 for more information).

Planning for *Next Generation 9-1-1*—the modernization of North American 9-1-1 networks—will also continue this year at the local, provincial and national levels. As the world continues to embrace new ways of communicating, emergency services will need to prepare for a future that takes into account new

technology and changes to operational processes in order to support new capabilities such as receiving text and video from members of the public.

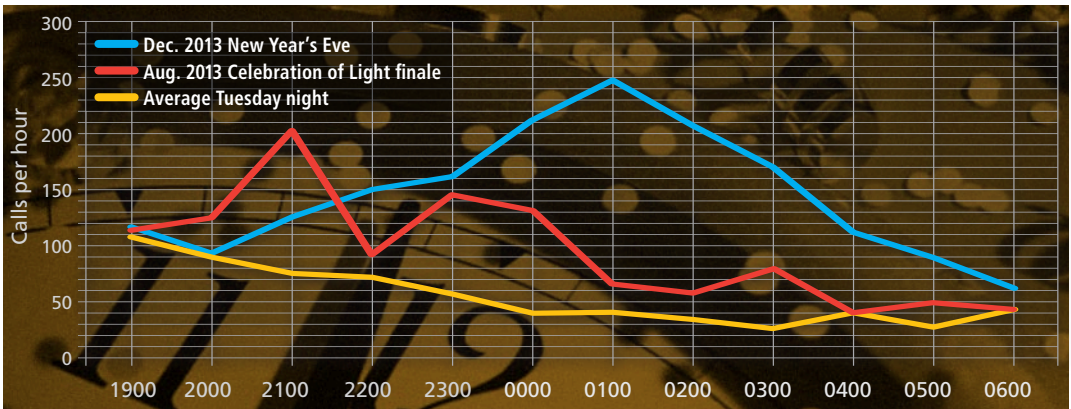
When E-Comm launched its new strategic plan, *Vision2020*, it set the direction for our service expansion, technology and people strategies, and our overall role in public safety within the province. Over the past two years we have made good progress with our strategic plan and in some aspects are actually ahead of schedule. For example, the average police dispatch levy in 2014 (1.9%) is well under the previously Board-approved strategic financial plan estimates. This is largely due to the significant growth in police dispatch, resulting in net financial efficiencies for all police dispatch partners. Managing growth in a sustainable fashion and maintaining optimum cost effectiveness in order to support further service expansion, is a priority for our organization. E-Comm has progressed considerably over the past few years and we continue to place high emphasis on advance planning. I invite you to learn more about *Vision2020* by viewing a special animated video available at [ecomm911.ca](http://ecomm911.ca).

As we prepare to enter the third year of our strategic plan our focus will be on technology projects like the Next Generation Radio Program as we proceed with preparations for this multi-year replacement of the current regional radio system. We will also be looking to continue to strengthen relationships with our partners and stakeholders, while continuing to promote discussion around the benefits of a shared approach to consolidated emergency communications.

We are proud to work alongside our partners in police, fire and ambulance and look forward to another great year for public safety in our region.

David Guscott, CEO

# Ringling in the New Year—multiple calls at a time



New Year's Eve is traditionally a busy night for emergency services and December 31, 2013 was no exception. Record high call volumes meant a hectic pace for E-Comm call-taking and dispatch staff as well as first responders. Just after midnight, the E-Comm communication centre lit up with non-stop calls including several priority events that continued for close to six hours. It's times like these that showcase the benefits of an integrated dispatch model, with cross-trained staff working side-by-side across multi-jurisdictional boundaries ensuring the influx of 9-1-1 calls were answered in a timely manner and responders were dispatched as quickly as possible.

"Teamwork and seamless coordination between E-Comm staff and our partners ensured our busiest night of the year was successfully managed," said Kim Singh, E-Comm Operations manager. "Because of the size of our communication centre and our multi-skilled staff, we were able to ramp-up resources to ensure calls continued to be answered in a fast and efficient manner."

The proximity and collaboration of call-takers and dispatchers can make a significant difference and have a positive impact on the outcome of an emergency call. With police call-takers from Squamish and West Vancouver sitting less than one-metre away from each other in the communication centre, colleagues were able to verbally communicate critical alerts regarding impaired drivers travelling across municipalities and relay important information efficiently to partner agencies.

A major event included a flash mob with more than 100 participants. It began in Vancouver, went through Richmond via the Canada Line and settled at Vancouver International Airport. This event saw collaboration from across jurisdictions as the Vancouver Police Department alerted Richmond RCMP of the group's movement. Although peaceful, the flash mob generated a high number of calls and required resources for crowd control.

New Year's Eve took the title for busiest night of the year with more than 1,749 calls; surpassing call volume for the annual Celebration of Light finale last summer.



# 9-1-1 nuisance calls a strain on emergency services

On December 30, E-Comm reached out to the public with a top-ten list of 9-1-1 nuisance calls to help educate the public on the proper use of 9-1-1 and to illustrate what is the true test of an emergency call. By using real examples of 9-1-1 nuisance calls, E-Comm hoped to draw awareness to a very real problem that impacts 9-1-1 centres around the world.


"We wanted to reach out to remind the public that 9-1-1 is not an information line, it's a life-line," said Jody Robertson, director of E-Comm Corporate Communications. "Both our partners and our staff are committed to public safety and when valuable resources like this are misused it affects everyone."

Although the vast majority of people use 9-1-1 responsibly, there are still many who misuse the system. Education is key, and in support of public safety E-Comm continues to look for new ways to communicate with the public on when and how to use 9-1-1.

E-Comm's top-ten list of 9-1-1 nuisance calls was shared with media through a news release and social media channels on Twitter and Facebook to encourage the public to learn more about 9-1-1.

Please visit [ecommm911.ca](http://ecommm911.ca) for more information.

## E-Comm lists top-ten 9-1-1 nuisance calls

- 
- 1 "I'd like to speak to someone about renting a fire truck to block off a street for a party."
  - 2 A caller phoned 9-1-1 to get their date's contact information so they could confirm details of their plans.
  - 3 A caller phoned 9-1-1 to report a missed newspaper delivery.
  - 4 Caller asks 9-1-1 if they can get the 'OK' to drive in the HOV lane because "traffic is backed up and they are late for an important meeting."
  - 5 Caller dials 9-1-1 to activate voicemail on his cellphone.
  - 6 "I threw my phone into the garbage can and can't get it out."
  - 7 Caller dials 9-1-1 to ask for a morning wake-up call.
  - 8 Caller dials 9-1-1 to ask how to call the operator.
  - 9 "Can an officer come over to tell my kids to go to bed?"
  - 10 "My son won't give me the remote control."

# New system to provide enhanced 9-1-1 access for DHHSI community

On January 24, the Canadian Wireless Telecommunications Association announced that carriers across the country had completed all required network upgrades to allow for the future rollout of Text with 9-1-1, a special messaging service for members of the Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing and Speech-Impaired (DHHSI) community. Now that the technical infrastructure is in place, Public-Safety Answer Points (PSAPs) are working toward implementing the required operational equipment, training and procedures to support the system.

In 2012, E-Comm was chosen by the CRTC as one of four national trial sites for "Text with 9-1-1 services" and has continued to play a critical role in the development of the new messaging system. The Text with 9-1-1 initiative is a perfect example of how innovation and technology can be used to enhance access to emergency services. Now that the infrastructure is in place E-Comm anticipates launching the service in late spring.

"This new text messaging technology will be a vast improvement from the current TTY (teletypewriter) system, allowing DHHSI callers to reach 9-1-1 from anywhere on their cellphone," said Doug Watson, E-Comm's vice-president of Operations. "As the 9-1-1 answer point for Metro Vancouver, the Sunshine Coast and Squamish-Lillooet Regional Districts, E-Comm is eager to continue to take a leadership role in enhancing emergency communication services for our region."

08:27:21 01/23/14  
Longcode for this conversation : 5559113114889. / Code long pour cette conversation : 5559113114889

E-Comm call-taker

"9-1-1. Police, Fire or Ambulance?"



Caller

"Police"

E-Comm call-taker

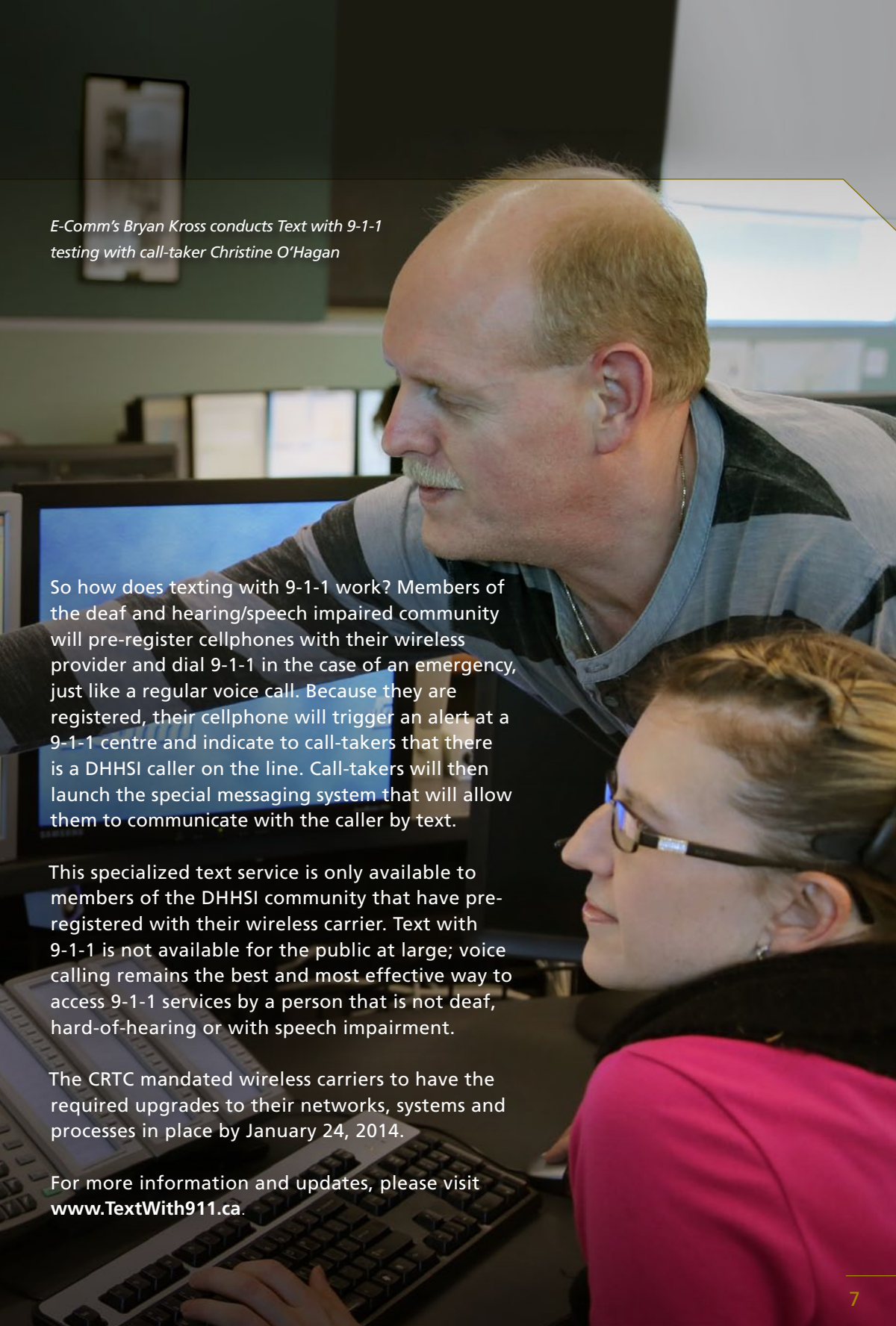
"For what city?"



Caller

"Burnaby"

*9-1-1 call-takers and members of the DHHSI community will be able to communicate through a special text message system.*

A photograph of a man and a woman in an office environment. The man, with a mustache and wearing a grey and black striped shirt, is leaning over the woman's shoulder. The woman, wearing glasses and a pink top, is looking at a computer monitor. The background shows office shelves and another monitor.

*E-Comm's Bryan Kross conducts Text with 9-1-1 testing with call-taker Christine O'Hagan*

So how does texting with 9-1-1 work? Members of the deaf and hearing/speech impaired community will pre-register cellphones with their wireless provider and dial 9-1-1 in the case of an emergency, just like a regular voice call. Because they are registered, their cellphone will trigger an alert at a 9-1-1 centre and indicate to call-takers that there is a DHHSI caller on the line. Call-takers will then launch the special messaging system that will allow them to communicate with the caller by text.

This specialized text service is only available to members of the DHHSI community that have pre-registered with their wireless carrier. Text with 9-1-1 is not available for the public at large; voice calling remains the best and most effective way to access 9-1-1 services by a person that is not deaf, hard-of-hearing or with speech impairment.

The CRTC mandated wireless carriers to have the required upgrades to their networks, systems and processes in place by January 24, 2014.

For more information and updates, please visit [www.TextWith911.ca](http://www.TextWith911.ca).



# Building a culture of interoperability



*The topic of interoperability continues to be a priority for the public-safety industry.*

Public-safety communications leaders and practitioners from across Canada, including representatives from first-responder agencies, government, E-Comm and other public-safety organizations attended the Seventh Canadian Public Safety Interoperability Group (CITIG 7) Workshop in Vancouver (November 24-27, 2013).

With a focus on information exchange, participants took part in topic-specific discussions and interactive break-out sessions designed to increase understanding around key voice and data interoperability issues within the public-safety sector.

The workshop began with a keynote address by former Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) Commissioner Timothy Denton, who provided an overview of his recent CRTC report on the current state of 9-1-1 in Canada (*Matters Related to Emergency 9-1-1 Services*). Topics included current and future challenges around the



9-1-1 system in terms of technology, location information for wireless calls, funding for the overall system and the implementation of next generation technology. Workshop sessions were diverse with topics on national and cross-border interoperability planning, trends in technology including voice and data, broadband spectrum management issues, location-based services and the role of social media in emergency management.

Highlights included a discussion on connected healthcare and the 700 MHz broadband spectrum with the CITIG Board and guest speaker Kevin McGinnis (a communications technology representative for a number of public-safety organizations in the United States), and a presentation from Lac-Mégantic Fire Chief Denis Lauzon, who shared his experiences from the tragic train crash on July 6, 2013. Chief Lauzon discussed his perspective on rail safety, how responders managed the event, the importance of standards for equipment interoperability and Next Generation 9-1-1.

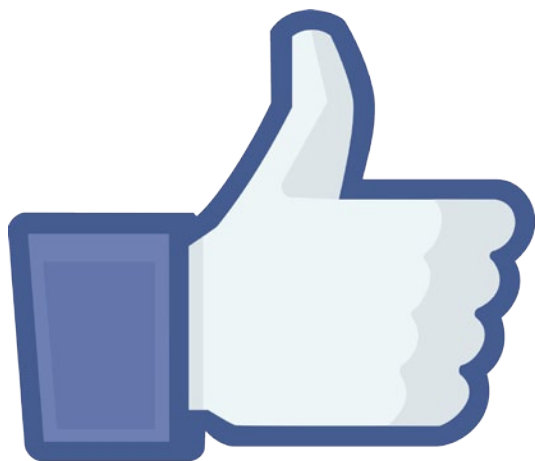
Another highlight of the workshop was discussion on the use of location-based technology for public-safety organizations, which included a presentation by E-Comm's Fire Applications & GIS Manager, Rob Darts. Immediate and up-to-date details of a situation are invaluable for first-responders approaching a location where a crime has been committed.

"Currently there is no way for officers on different shifts to have a comprehensive set of real-time information when they approach a physical location while on duty. Location-based services give first-responders immediate access to this information to coordinate response," said Lance Valcour, executive director for CITIG.

With the 2013 conference concluded, planning has already begun on a two-day event in October that will be called the CITIG Canada-US Bi-National Cross Border Workshop which will be held in Ontario. The focus of the conference will be on improving cross-border response at the local and regional level. The target audience for the workshop will include both U.S. and Canadian interoperability leaders and users from emergency response agencies and key government agencies. CITIG 8 is scheduled to follow from November 30 to December 3. The exact dates and locations for this event will be announced shortly with full details available at [www.citig.ca](http://www.citig.ca). Key topics will include broadband data use and management in public safety.

"While voice interoperability continues to be a priority, we're also seeing a shift in many of our discussions to the use of broadband data in public safety and technologies associated with Next Generation 9-1-1," said Valcour. "Video and data texting to 9-1-1 for the public at large were at the forefront of our events. These topics have been dominating our discussions and will continue to do so at our upcoming sessions."

# New social media channel to support 9-1-1 education



On December 30 E-Comm joined one of the world's most popular social media platforms by launching a corporate Facebook page. With successful Twitter and YouTube accounts already in place, the goal behind the new Facebook page is to help spread public education messages even further and provide yet another platform for connecting with partners and members of the general public. There will also be ample information available for children.

"Like" **EComm911Info** to stay up-to-date on important 9-1-1 information, tips and updates.

# E-Comm in the Community

## **Science World First Responders Weekend (Oct 19-20)**

ALI attended the Science World First Responders Weekend October 19 & 20, along with our police, fire and ambulance partners.

## **ELSA NET (Nov 4)**

E-Comm attended the annual English Language Services for Adults (ELSA) Net Conference, providing multilingual information on 9-1-1 services.

## **CITIG (Nov 25-27)**

E-Comm attended the Canadian Interoperability Technology Interest Group (CITIG) workshop—a highly interactive event addressing key voice and data interoperability issues facing today's public safety sector.

## **Canucks Community Corner (Dec 8)**

ALI was at Rogers Arena for Canucks Community Corner on December 8. While ALI greeted kids, E-Comm ambassadors were on site handing out public education materials and answering questions about 9-1-1.

## **New Westminster Fire & Rescue Services Open House (Oct 5)**



*ALI and Fire Chief Tim Armstrong met at the New Westminster Fire & Rescue Services Open House on October 5.*

## **Rogers Santa Claus Parade (Dec 1)**



*ALI participated in the 10th annual Rogers Santa Claus Parade.*



# E-Comm service by the numbers

October – December 2013

## 9-1-1- service levels

9-1-1 calls placed to E-Comm	Service level*
211,468	97%

\* 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 cellphones

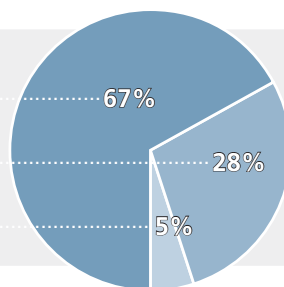
Landline	Cellular
72,491	138,977
34%	66%

## 9-1-1 calls directed to police, fire and ambulance

Police

Ambulance

Fire



## Technology

9-1-1 availability: 100%

## System availability

System air time (seconds)	Transmissions (#)	System availability average
117,238,688	30,593,754	99.9959%

## 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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This newsletter is produced by E-Comm Corporate Communications.  
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