

e-COMMUNIQUE

E-Comm Quarterly Newsletter

No.57

Winter 2018



This issue of e-communicé is dedicated to Abbotsford Police Constable John Davidson, who died in the line of duty on November 6, 2017. A true hero.

E-Comm police call-taker Jefferey Ching's message: non-emergency calls can tie up 9-1-1.

One-in-five 9-1-1 calls for police not an emergency

E-Comm reached out to British Columbians with a month-long campaign between November and December 2017 to bring attention to the number of non-emergency calls tying up emergency lines.

During the advertising and social media campaign that included radio ads and posters on transit shelters across Metro Vancouver, E-Comm asked people to not let non-emergencies compete with real ones. (See page 3 for posters used in this campaign).

Using recent E-Comm estimates showing one-in-five 9-1-1 calls for police isn't an emergency, E-Comm Manager of Corporate Communications Jasmine Bradley explained the reasons for the campaign in media interviews. "Anytime a 9-1-1 line is taken up for a matter that doesn't require immediate assistance from first responders, it occupies that lifeline for someone who needs it for a life or death situation."

E-Comm outlined recent examples of police matters at its centre that should have been reported on non-emergency lines, not 9-1-1:

- Vehicle break-in that happened three days earlier
- Motor vehicle crash with no injuries and the vehicle was driveable
- A break-in that occurred 90 minutes earlier, with no suspect on scene and no one at risk

Police call-taker Jefferey Ching also spoke to the media about his experiences dealing with non-emergency calls received on 9-1-1 lines. "I hope people will help us by taking the opportunity to learn more about the differences and to keep their local non-emergency numbers on hand if need be."

Non-emergency numbers within E-Comm's service area are available at nonemergency.ca.

Unhappy with nail polish colour is E-Comm's 2017 top reason to not call 9-1-1



E-Comm police call-taker Christie Duncan speaks to Global News reporter Jordan Armstrong about 9-1-1 nuisance calls.

For the fifth consecutive year, E-Comm published its top 10 list of nuisance calls in December. And, as usual, the year-end list sparked interest in newsrooms and on social media.

E-Comm police call-taker Christie Duncan fielded the call that topped the list: a person contacted 9-1-1 to complain that a nail salon wouldn't change their nail polish colour. "Spending time on calls like these takes me away from being available to help someone who is in a serious emergency situation," said Duncan. "And believe it or not, this isn't the first time I've received a call about the colour of nail polish."

Duncan and E-Comm spokesperson Jody Robertson spoke to media outlets to emphasize that while the calls sound unbelievable, nuisance calls are a very serious issue. "They're more common than you might think," said Robertson. "Our call-takers must listen to every caller and ask questions about the caller's situation. So, an emergency line can be taken up with calls such as the ones on this top 10 list while our call-taker confirms if there's a real emergency situation."

"Spending time on calls like these takes me away from being available to help someone who is in a serious emergency situation."

Christie Duncan, E-Comm police call-taker

E-Comm's 2017 list of top 10 reasons to not call 9-1-1

- 1 Complaining a salon wouldn't change nail polish colour
- 2 Car refusing to move forward at a gas station pump
- 3 To report food was inedible and restaurant refusing to provide refund
- 4 Complaining tenant moved without returning keys
- 5 Calling because someone parked in their parking spot
- 6 Wondering if a washroom closed sign at a popular beach was legitimate
- 7 Complaining gas station wouldn't accept coins for payment
- 8 Calling to ask if raccoons are dangerous animals
- 9 Asking if there's a law preventing washing clothes at 6 a.m.
- 10 Calling to check the time following the fall time change



From page 1: These images from E-Comm's fall 2017 public education campaign asked the public to #HelpUsHelp by keeping 9-1-1 lines free for real emergencies.



CEO Update

Oliver Grüter-Andrew, President and CEO

In September, I joined E-Comm as President and CEO and the first five months on the job have flown by. I'm reminded every day of how fortunate I am to work alongside (and for) such amazing and dedicated people. From frontline 9-1-1 staff to technology experts and support staff working behind the scenes, to police officers, firefighters and paramedics on the ground, to the municipalities and government agencies responsible for overseeing the framework for our public safety services—we all feel a shared sense of responsibility for keeping our communities safe.

I have had the chance to visit with many of our stakeholders, including police and fire leadership and numerous municipal partners since joining the public safety community. Ride-alongs with our police dispatch partners have been especially valuable as has been sitting with our call-takers, report agents and dispatchers and other members of the E-Comm team in departments across the company. Moving forward, I am committed to continuing this outreach to keep the connection and open dialogue going. Open conversation fits perfectly with E-Comm's values: Respect, Accountability, Integrity, Service and Collaboration. Values are crucial for an organization and all five of these align with my beliefs.

I would like to take this opportunity to announce that Erin Ramsay has been appointed our new Vice-President of Operations. Erin has been at E-Comm for more than 12 years in both operational and executive

positions and has extensive knowledge of the dispatch role through her past career with the RCMP. The level of energy she brings to this role, combined with her commitment to staff and our partner agencies, leaves no doubt in my mind that under her leadership we will be able to take our communication centre into the future and address the significant change that is ahead through initiatives such as Next Generation 9-1-1.

Throughout 2018, we'll be revitalizing our strategic plan to focus on the wellbeing of our employees and needs of our partners, along with preparing for future technology changes. We will also be wrapping up final agency transitions to the next generation radio network, with the team on track for completing this major technology initiative on time and under budget. New partnerships will also play a significant role in our work for 2018, with the Township of Langley and the City of Langley's fire services scheduled to transition to our radio system in April and Port Coquitlam Fire & Emergency Services recently joining us on February 5. Our public safety role on southern Vancouver Island will also expand, as we continue our work on the opening of a new consolidated 9-1-1 and dispatch centre in 2019.

All things considered, 2018 is shaping up to be a busy year and I look forward to providing future updates. I feel privileged to have the opportunity to join the public safety community and to support E-Comm's contribution to safer communities.

Prefer to receive e-communiqué electronically?



In keeping with E-Comm's social responsibility initiatives, we invite you to sign up to receive our newsletter electronically by emailing corpcomm@ecom911.ca.

E-Comm now dispatching for Abbotsford Police Department and Coquitlam Fire/Rescue



Abbotsford Police Chief Bob Rich broadcasting from E-Comm on September 19.

Coquitlam Fire/Rescue Chief Wade Pierlot (now retired) says moving to E-Comm makes sense for his growing city.

E-Comm has welcomed two new agencies—Abbotsford Police Department (APD) and Coquitlam Fire/Rescue (CFR)—to its dispatch services.

The APD moved its dispatch services to E-Comm on September 19, 2017—the first municipal police department outside Metro Vancouver to join E-Comm, and is its 18th police dispatch partner.

By moving to E-Comm, APD now has access to a much larger workforce to help answer 9-1-1 calls and support officers on the ground. As Chief Constable Bob Rich explained following the cutover, this is particularly valuable during major events that cause sudden spikes in call volume.

“The safety of our community is a top priority for the Abbotsford Police Department and we continually look for ways to improve our service and enhance the safety of our city.”

E-Comm has been a proud partner of the APD since 2011 when it first joined the E-Comm radio system. E-Comm has also been providing 9-1-1 call-answer services for the Upper Fraser Valley since 2016.

On November 21, 2017, Coquitlam Fire/Rescue’s dispatch services moved to E-Comm ensuring the community will continue to receive high quality 9-1-1 services as call volumes rise in the future. Access to leading-edge technology, increased staff coverage, alignment with other regional emergency responders and cost benefits are among the advantages of the shift to E-Comm.

“Our decision was made on our ability to keep pace with the rapid growth in the city of Coquitlam—which translated to increased call volume,” said CFR Chief Wade Pierlot, who recently retired. “We want to make sure that we can continue to provide that excellent service to the citizens of Coquitlam. And the tremendous dispatch workforce that E-Comm has, is going to provide that service.”

E-Comm has been partners with Coquitlam since 2008 when the department first joined the regional radio system, and has been providing emergency back-up services for CFR dispatch since 2013.

E-Comm’s fire dispatch partnerships now span from the Whistler area to Delta.

Agency transitions to the new radio network nearly complete



Vancouver Police Department Deputy Chief Constable Howard Chow makes his inaugural broadcast on October 16, confirming Vancouver police's transition to the new radio network.

Throughout 2017, nearly 30 agencies—including police, fire and ambulance—successfully moved to the Next Generation Radio Program (NGRP) network.

“On behalf of the E-Comm Board, I want to extend my congratulations and thanks to the NGRP team for all of its success in 2017,” said E-Comm Board Chair Doug Campbell. “Having been involved in many significant technology and change projects over the years, I know what a challenge it is to get a project of this magnitude done on time and on budget and the NGRP team is doing both. I am impressed with the diligence of the planning, attention to detail and quality of execution, as well as with the collaboration with our partner agencies.”

BC Emergency Health Services (BCEHS) began communicating on the new network on

November 20. The first ambulance in the Lower Mainland equipped with the new radios left Station 248 in downtown Vancouver with BCEHS District Manager Blake Kendon making the first broadcast over the new system. “This is an exciting day for the ambulance service,” he said. As the overnight crews came off their shift at the station—one of the busiest in the province—the daytime ambulance crews picked up their new radios and headed out. “Everyone seemed to pick up on it,” added Kendon. “The radios are better than we had before.”

On November 2, three fire departments on the North Shore, along with Lions Bay Fire Rescue, migrated to the NGRP. “This is a huge day for the West Vancouver Fire Department and across the North Shore, not only for the interoperability

“This is an exciting day for the ambulance service. The radios are better than we had before.”

Blake Kendon
BCEHS District Manager



that we’re going to see throughout the region, but also for the safety of our firefighters,” said Chief Randy Heath of West Vancouver Fire and Rescue Services. He added the clarity of the new radio system will allow “for fewer mistakes on the ground.” North Vancouver City Fire Department Chief Dan Pistilli also had high praise for E-Comm staff members for their help in completing the transition. “We couldn’t have done it without all their expertise. We are grateful for everyone at E-Comm for their support in the process.”

Continued on next page >>>

NGRP Transitions in 2017

- Port Moody Police Department
- New Westminster Police Department
- West Vancouver Police Department
- Port Moody Fire-Rescue
- Dispatch only Fire Departments
- Delta Police Department
- Richmond RCMP
- Ridge Meadows RCMP
- UBC RCMP
- North Vancouver RCMP
- Burnaby RCMP
- Coquitlam RCMP
- New Westminster Fire & Rescue Services
- RCMP 43
- BC Conservation Officer Service
- Vancouver Police Department
- Surrey Fire Service
- White Rock Fire Rescue
- Langley RCMP
- North Vancouver City Fire Department
- District of North Vancouver Fire and Rescue Services
- West Vancouver Fire & Rescue
- Lions Bay Fire Rescue
- Surrey RCMP
- White Rock RCMP
- BC Emergency Health Services
- Transit Police Department
- Abbotsford Police Department



(L-R) Deputy Fire Chief Wayne Kennedy (District of North Vancouver), Fire Chief Randy Heath (West Vancouver) and Fire Chief Dan Pistilli (City of North Vancouver) with the next generation radios on November 2.

“We couldn’t have done it without all their expertise. We are grateful for everyone at E-Comm for their support in the process.”

**Chief Dan Pistilli
North Vancouver City Fire Department**

After more than a year of planning, Wayne Kennedy, Deputy Fire Chief for the District of North Vancouver Fire and Rescue Services said the transition was completed seamlessly. “It went without a hitch, so we’re excited. Thanks to all the guys at E-Comm for their help.”

Also in November, both Surrey and White Rock RCMP detachments switched to the new radio system. The

Transit Police Department also moved to the NGRP network at the end of that month. The Abbotsford Police Department transitioned in December.

The first quarter of 2018 wraps up all NGRP transitions with Coquitlam Fire/Rescue, Richmond Fire-Rescue, Vancouver Fire and Rescue Services and Delta Fire and Emergency Services.

Recycling or upgrading— what happens to old generation radios



Old radio equipment—ready for electronic recycling.

With NGRP transitions nearing completion, some of the focus at E-Comm has turned to dealing with the thousands of old radios from police and fire agencies and BCEHS that have been returned as a result of the switch to the new P25 technology.

When a mobile radio arrives at E-Comm from an agency, members of the technology and shipping teams record the serial number and the radio unit number and remove any other distinguishing identification marks. “We grind inscribed numbers that identify it as E-Comm property, open the unit up and use a centre-punch to disable a chip which, in turn, renders the radio unusable,” said Blair Kent, E-Comm Wireless Operations Manager. Some of the mobile radios date back to 2000.

“Not all radios wind up in the recycling bin,” added Kent. “We’re disposing the vast majority of radios, but some still have a bit of life.” E-Comm will keep a number of refurbished radios to be used as spares and loaners for



E-Comm Technology Services staff grind inscribed numbers off old radios.

the agencies, or when they need extra equipment for special events.

In addition to the radios, other parts are also recycled including speaker microphones, chargers and batteries. And there’s even a nugget of value in the in the old radios. “There’s a very small quantity of gold in them,” said Kent.

Construction on schedule for new South Island 9-1-1/Police Dispatch Centre



Construction of the new South Island 9-1-1/Police Dispatch Centre began in October.

The new consolidated 9-1-1/police dispatch centre on southern Vancouver Island is beginning to take shape.

The two-storey, 1,200-square-metre South Island 9-1-1/Police Dispatch Centre amalgamates 9-1-1 call-answer and police dispatch services and is expected to open in 2019. The Capital Regional District (CRD)-owned facility in Saanich will house police call-taking and dispatch for the Victoria, Saanich, Central Saanich and Oak Bay police departments as well as all local RCMP detachments. E-Comm will manage the centre on behalf of the police agencies.

Crews broke ground in October 2017 and despite the challenges of working in winter conditions, construction is on schedule on the site preparation and foundation. The CRD is leading the design and building construction with input from E-Comm.

“We are working closely with the CRD and police agencies on this project,” said E-Comm’s Vice-President of Technology Services Mike Webb. “The vision is to create a secure, post-disaster building complete with seismic hardening, power redundancy and special security provisions similar to E-Comm’s facility in Vancouver. Our top priority is to ensure all operational and technical requirements are met before the centre goes live in early 2019.”

The project’s steering committee includes representatives from E-Comm, the provincial government, police agencies and the CRD.

Project updates, building renderings and site work photos are available on the CRD website (crd.bc.ca/project/capital-projects/south-island-communications-centre).



When completed, the facility will consolidate 9-1-1 call-answer and police dispatch services on the South Island.



Concept drawing of building exterior.

Steering Committee

South Island Police Agencies and Capital Regional District

Chief Bob Downie

*Saanich Police Department
(Co-Chair)*

Lois Karr

*Director of Operational
Communications Centre Program,
RCMP (Co-Chair)*

Chief Andy Brinton

Oak Bay Police Department

Deputy Chief Steve Ing

Victoria Police Department

Kevin Lorette

*General Manager Planning and
Protective Services,
Capital Regional District*

Chief Les Sylven

Central Saanich Police Service

Provincial Government

Clayton Pecknold

*ADM and Director, Police Services,
Provincial Government*

Sandra Sajko

*Executive Director, Police Services,
Provincial Government*

E-Comm

Oliver Grüter-Andrew

CEO

Beatrix Nicolato

Vice-President & CFO

Erin Ramsay

Vice-President of Operations

Jody Robertson

*Executive Director of Corporate
Communications & Governance*

Mike Webb

*Vice-President of
Technology Services*

Brian Ackles

Program Manager

E-Comm

IN THE COMMUNITY



E-Comm staff were proud to march with our emergency-service partners in the Vancouver Pride Parade.



Our E-Comm ambassador ALI took part in the Vancouver Santa Claus Parade in December with friends from the Vancouver Police Department and the Grinch.

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

 e-communiqué was printed with vegetable-based inks on chlorine-free, 100% post-consumer waste recycled paper.

E-Comm service by the numbers

July – December 2017

9-1-1 service levels

9-1-1 calls placed to E-Comm*	Service level achieved*
779,226	98%

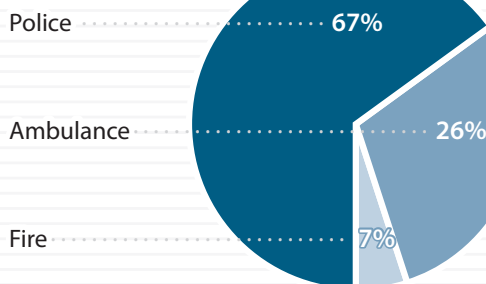
* Total number of 9-1-1 calls for Metro Vancouver and 25 other regional districts and communities spanning from Vancouver Island to the Alberta and U.S. Borders, to north of Prince George. Includes call volume for the city of Abbotsford as of September 19, 2017.

* 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

Landlines	Cellphones
238,829	540,397
31%	69%

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



Technology

9-1-1 availability	100%
Radio network availability average	99.99%
Radio transmissions (#)	58,549,535
Radio system air time (seconds)	224,371,372

NOTE: NGRP network stats will be reported once all agencies have transitioned to the digital P25 system in 2018.

For more information on E-Comm or to comment on a story, contact corpcomm@ecomm911.ca

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