

## Location, Location, Location

Cell phone users reminded to pay attention to their surroundings in case of emergency

Real estate isn't the only place where location counts; for emergency services it is a critical part of response. With almost half of all 9-1-1 calls now originating from cell phones, E-Comm is reaching out to the public to remind them that unlike landlines, cell phones do not automatically provide location information to 9-1-1 call-takers.

"Letting people know they need to be aware of their location at all times is a matter of public safety," says Jody Robertson, E-Comm's director of corporate communications. "You should always be aware of your location—what city you are in, building or home addresses, cross streets, landmarks or any other information that will help emergency personnel find you."

Statistics Canada figures show the number of cell phone-only homes is on the rise.

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*One of two "Know Your Location" ads reminding cell phone users to be aware of their location at all times*

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British Columbia had the highest percentage of cell phone-only households, with 10.2 per cent compared to a national average of 6.4 per cent in 2007. And in a recent Ipsos-Reid survey in the Lower Mainland, close to half of the respondents who were cell phone users mistakenly believed their location information was displayed to 9-1-1 or didn't know.

Location information is not provided to 9-1-1 by VoIP (Voice over Internet

Protocol) telephones either. Consumers should check with providers and consider the safety implications when choosing VoIP or cell phones for their sole telephone.

The "know your location" campaign, which runs on both radio and in community newspapers until October, is part of E-Comm's ongoing public education efforts on 9-1-1. More information can be found at E-Comm's Web site, [ecomm911.ca](http://ecomm911.ca).

### *Tips for calling 9-1-1— no matter what phone you are using!*

- Know your location at all times and communicate it as soon as you are asked.
- You should know what city you are in, building or home addresses, cross streets, and any other information, like landmarks, that will help emergency personnel find you. An exact street address is best.
- Learn your compass directions (north, south, east, and west).
- If you are driving, be aware of the road or highway that you are travelling and any cross streets or highway exits you pass. Look for landmarks or businesses that are near your location.
- It's a good idea to post your address and phone number near your home telephone. In an emergency situation it is easy to forget basic information and it could also be helpful for visitors or babysitters.

### *Considering giving up your landline?*

- If you rely on only a cellular or VoIP phone at home, be aware that your location information will not be provided to the 9-1-1 centre. A caller from your home must provide the location information.
- Keep your cell phone in the same place in your home so you, your children and your guests can find it in a moment's notice. Post your address with it.
- Ensure your cellular phone is fully charged at all times.
- Teach your children how to activate your cell phone, how to send a call and help them learn your address.

# Paramount Response to Historic Building Fire

**“In terms of size and destruction, the Woodlands fire was the largest that we’ve had in the past 30 years.”**

***Jim Cook,  
Deputy Chief,  
New Westminster  
Fire & Rescue***



***A raging fire overtook the Woodlands building and put New Westminster Fire & Rescue to the test this July***

It was all hands on deck Wednesday, July 9 shortly after 1200 hrs, when E-Comm

Operations staff received an influx of 9-1-1 calls about a large fire in New Westminster. The historic Woodlands building (built in 1878) was ablaze, resulting in a full first-alarm assignment for fire. The building was vacant, awaiting re-development, so the fire spread quickly. “In terms of size and destruction, the Woodlands fire was the largest that we’ve had in the past 30 years,” says Jim Cook, deputy chief, New Westminster Fire & Rescue.

E-Comm received approximately 22 calls about the fire within a 90 second period and immediately began dispatching New West Fire crews. The first crew was dispatched in 76 seconds from when the first 9-1-1 call was received (better than the National Fire Prevention standard of 90 seconds). The first apparatus was on scene in 3 minutes 25 seconds from the first 9-1-1 call; with more units following close behind. Although the response was extremely quick from both E-Comm and New Westminster Fire, the fire was so large it required additional support from neighbouring fire departments.

“The problems presented by the large amount of smoke and fire were significant due to the close proximity of high-density residential buildings and two major transportation routes nearby. E-Comm’s dispatchers are well trained and they provided critical support to ensure that firefighter and public safety were well managed,” adds Cook. E-Comm also coordinated the dispatching of several fire units from Burnaby and then began callouts to city services needing to be aware of this type of event (BC Hydro, Translink, Social Services, etc). The fire forced evacuations of neighbouring apartments, caused closures to transportation links and utilized an extremely large amount of the city’s water supply.

More than 40 firefighters were on scene for the initial fire and several crews remained on site well into the night to ensure the fire was extinguished and did not spread. No one was hurt and the cause of the fire is unknown.

Congratulations to New Westminster Fire & Rescue for doing an extraordinary job in managing such a large fire. As the Woodlands fire raged on, E-Comm’s fire team was also managing a garage fire in Richmond, a structure fire in Vancouver, a grass fire in Vancouver, and wires down in Delta.

**Congratulations to Jim Cook, who is now Fire Chief of West Vancouver Fire & Rescue.**

# Canadian Major Events Study



*The Celebration of Light draws hundreds of thousands of people to Vancouver each summer for a series of spectacular fireworks shows*

A national project team of communications and first response experts across Canada, including E-Comm operations manager Cindy Defazio, has been participating in a study to review how major event emergency communications are handled across the country. The project came about as E-Comm researched approaches to enhance major event communications planning and operations for the upcoming 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The objective of the major events study is to research communications capabilities, planning and processes during planned major events in four Canadian cities (Vancouver, Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal) and then report on best practices. "It has been very

**"By observing how other communications centres operate in major events, we gathered some great strategies that helped us make operational improvements this year to our handling of the Celebration of Light."**

***Cindy Defazio,  
E-Comm Operations Manager***

interesting to see how differently or more surprisingly, how similarly the various services across Canada meet the challenges of handling major events," says Eric Janus, shift manager of the Ottawa Police. The team observed major event communications during the Saint Jean Baptiste Day celebrations in Montreal, Canada Day celebrations in Ottawa, Caribana (a summer Caribbean carnival) in Toronto and the Celebration of Light in Vancouver.

“By observing how other communications centres operate in major events, we gathered some great strategies that helped us make operational improvements this year to our handling of the Celebration of Light,” says Defazio. Among these improvements was implementing an event dispatch model used by the Montreal Police Communication Centre, where two dispatchers share the same maestro radio and talk group. Previously one dispatcher at E-Comm would handle a radio and talk group. By splitting this between two dispatchers the workload is reduced in half, allowing the dispatchers to focus on fewer events and members at one time, and resulting in an overall better level of service.

The final major events research report will be provided to the four cities involved in the study and shared with other public safety agencies across Canada and internationally. A final report is scheduled for April 2009. The process improvements that E-Comm has already made, as well as insight from the final report, will provide key information to refining E-Comm’s major events model for the 2010 Games.

### 9-1-1 Calls During Celebration of Light\*

July 23	1,093 calls	98% calls answered in 5 sec/less
July 26	1,581 calls	99% calls answered in 5 sec/less
July 30	1,048 calls	100% calls answered in 5 sec/less
August 2	1,498 calls	100% calls answered in 5 sec/less

\* Between 1900 hrs – 0630 hrs the following day

## Rolling Out Project FIRES

Project FIRES (Fire Record System) is a new integrated Record Management System (RMS) designed to support the operations and management of fire departments. The need for Project FIRES was initially identified by the Richmond, Port Moody and Vancouver Fire & Rescue departments. They needed to replace their aging systems that are no longer supported and unable to interface with newer Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) systems.

The contract for this project was awarded to FDM Software of North Vancouver. E-Comm is acting as project manager on behalf of the fire agencies. E-Comm also hosts the Project FIRES system, provides database and system upgrades and works with the agencies to manage network connections.

Project FIRES is modeled on PRIME-BC—the Police Record Management System (RMS) used by police agencies throughout B.C. The program includes an interface to transfer all

required fire incidents to the Office of the Fire Commissioner (as required by legislation) and it could also form the basis of a provincial fire RMS, similar to PRIME-BC.

The initial RMS modules to manage “incidents” and “personnel” were implemented in 2006 for Vancouver and Richmond Fire. Subsequently, the “property” and “inspection” modules were implemented in Richmond in 2007 and in Vancouver in 2008. In July of this year Port Moody joined the Project FIRES system.

New Westminster and Delta will transition to Project FIRES in September and October. In addition, a number of other fire departments have indicated interest in moving to this new system.

For more information on Project FIRES please contact Glen Miller, director of information technology at E-Comm 9-1-1, [glen.miller@ecomm911.ca](mailto:glen.miller@ecomm911.ca).



# E-Comm Welcomes the 2008-2009 Board of Directors

*E-Comm's 2008-2009 Board of Directors at their first board meeting of the year*

E-Comm 9-1-1 is pleased to announce the following appointments to its 2008-2009 Board of Directors:

**Daphne Corbett, independent director, has been named Board Chair.**

## **New appointments:**

- Helen Blackburn, independent director
- Ernie Malone, chief superintendent, RCMP, ret (representing RCMP)
- Bill McNulty, councillor, City of Richmond (representing City of Richmond)

## **Returning board members:**

- Mary-Wade Anderson, councillor, City of White Rock (representing City of White Rock, City of Surrey, Township of Langley)
- Kevin Begg, assistant deputy minister, Policing and Community Safety Branch, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General (representing the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General)
- Calvin Donnelly, councillor, City of New Westminster (representing City of Coquitlam, City of Port Moody, City of Port Coquitlam, City of New Westminster, Village of Belcarra)
- Len Garis, fire chief, City of Surrey (representing City of Surrey, City of White Rock, Township of Langley)
- Pamela Goldsmith-Jones, mayor, District of West Vancouver (representing District of West Vancouver, District of North Vancouver, City of North Vancouver)
- Cindy Grauer (representing City of Vancouver)
- Jocelyn Kelley (independent director)
- Don MacLean, mayor, City of Pitt Meadows (representing District of Maple Ridge and City of Pitt Meadows)
- Karl Preuss, director of finance, Corporation of Delta (representing the Corporation of Delta)
- Michael Sanderson, executive director, Lower Mainland, BC Ambulance Service (representing Emergency Health Services)
- John Schouten, inspector, Vancouver Police Department, ret (representing Vancouver Police Board)
- Wes Shoemaker, associate deputy minister, Emergency Management B.C., Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General (representing the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General)
- David Sutcliffe, independent director
- Joe Trasolini, mayor, City of Port Moody (representing independent police boards for the City of Port Moody, District of West Vancouver, City of New Westminster, and South Coast British Columbia Transportation Authority)

# New Vice-President of Operations

Doug Watson is E-Comm's new vice-president of Operations. Doug is the former general manager of ADT Security Services (Western Canada) and a former vice-president of field operations for TELUS.

Deborah Cherry, former director of Operations at E-Comm, retired from her position in May of this year, after 35 years in emergency services.



*Doug Watson,  
Vice-President, Operations*

## Planning for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games

E-Comm hosted a meeting for its radio and dispatch customers in August to discuss some of the emergency communications issues surrounding the 2010 Games. Approximately 30 police and fire designates attended from Metro Vancouver, Howe Sound/Whistler and the Sunshine Coast. E-Comm is also working with the Integrated Security Unit (ISU) and police, fire and ambulance in the Games host region, to determine a 9-1-1 call flow model that will support public safety throughout the Games.

## Wide-Area Radio System

### System Grade of Service and Availability

	May	June	July	August
System Queuing	0.01%	0.01%	0.16%	0.09%
System Availability	99.987%	99.996%	99.999%	99.995%

### System Grade of Service Average\* for May – August 2008

Target: <3.00%      Actual: 0.07%

*\*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.*

### System availability average for May – August 2008

Target: 99.99%      Actual: 99.994%

### Wide-Area Radio System System Transmissions

May	
System Air Time (s)	36,093,445
Transmissions (#)	9,430,749
June	
System Air Time (s)	36,208,229
Transmissions (#)	9,460,658
July	
System Air Time (s)	39,226,497
Transmissions (#)	10,192,835
August	
System Air Time (s)	35,564,420
Transmissions (#)	9,265,387

(s) Amount of airtime in seconds

(#) Number of times a repeater transmitted in response to a member talking on a radio

# 9-1-1 Service Levels

	911 Calls Placed to E-Comm	Service Level*
May	87,835	97%
June	88,732	98%
July	93,972	98%
August	91,804	98%
<b>Total</b>	<b>362,343</b>	<b>98%</b>

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

## Technology (May – August 2008)

**Telephony (9-1-1) Uptime:** 100%  
**Altaris CAD\*\* Uptime:** 99.99%

\*\*Computer-Aided Dispatch

## 9-1-1 Calls Directed to Police, Fire and Ambulance (May – August 2008)



## Number of Landline vs. Cell Phone 9-1-1 Calls Received

	Landline Telephones	Cellular Telephones
May	49% (42,763 calls)	51% (45,072 calls)
June	49% (43,205 calls)	51% (45,527 calls)
July	48% (45,373 calls)	52% (48,599 calls)
August	48% (44,177 calls)	52% (47,627 calls)
<b>Total</b>	<b>48.5%</b> <b>175,518 calls</b>	<b>51.5%</b> <b>186,825 calls</b>

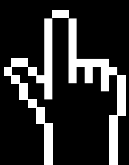
### E-Comm Mission

To serve emergency personnel and the public by providing exceptional communications services that help save lives and protect property.

### E-Comm Values

Respect, Accountability, Integrity, Service, Collaboration

Visit our Web site:  
**[ecomm911.ca](http://ecomm911.ca)**



This newsletter is produced by E-Comm Corporate Communications. For more information on E-Comm or to comment on a story featured in this newsletter, contact Angela Wilson at: [angela.wilson@ecomm911.ca](mailto:angela.wilson@ecomm911.ca)

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E-Comm 9-1-1 was printed with vegetable-based inks on acid-/chlorine-free, 50% post-consumer waste recycled and Forest Stewardship Council certified paper.