

Backgrounder

March 6, 2019

South Island 9-1-1/Police Dispatch Centre

The Genesis

Consolidating the three police call-taking and dispatch centres that previously existed in the Capital Regional District (Victoria, Saanich, and West Shore RCMP) into one shared centre had been in discussion for four years. The decision to move forward on this consolidated, post-disaster facility was announced on February 27, 2017.

Overview

The South Island 9-1-1/Police Dispatch Centre is the first point of contact for all 9-1-1 callers on central and southern Vancouver Island. It also houses police call-taking and dispatch services for the Victoria, Saanich, Central Saanich and Oak Bay police departments and local RCMP detachments (11). Call takers also answer non-emergency calls for these police agencies.

The Building

- Located at 4219 Commerce Circle in Saanich, construction of the two-storey, 1,200-square-metre, post-disaster facility began in October 2017.
- The Capital Regional District (CRD) built and owns the \$13.1 million building.
- The facility is built to post-disaster specifications and is designed to be self-sufficient for 72 hours if power to the building becomes unavailable.
- The facility is outfitted with ergonomic workstations, fitness, food and rest areas for the mental health and well-being of staff, who work 12-hour shifts.
- The facility is under 24/7 security surveillance and is not accessible to the public.

The Services

- E-Comm, Emergency Communications for British Columbia Inc., operates the South Island 9-1-1/Police Dispatch Centre by way of contract with the CRD and participating police agencies.
- E-Comm's overall annual operating budget for all operations (Lower Mainland and South Island Centres) is approximately \$75 million. Approximately 86 per cent of costs are related to staffing (72 per cent), technology provision and facilities.
- The South Island Centre operation accounts for about 11 per cent of E-Comm's total budget (approximately \$8.6 million). The annual operating budget includes 9-1-1 call-answer, police emergency and non-emergency call taking and dispatch, and all costs associated with maintaining the technology, facility and support costs.



- For 9-1-1 calls requesting police services for Victoria, Saanich, Central Saanich, Oak Bay and RCMP detachments (see full list below), the call takers in the South Island Centre will answer and dispatch those calls.
- For 9-1-1 calls requesting fire or ambulance services, the call takers in the South Island Centre will transfer those calls to the appropriate fire department and or/BC Emergency Health Services based on the caller's request
- The centre is expected to answer an estimated 100,000 9-1-1 calls a year.
- With the consolidated model of call-taking, during periods of high call volumes on the South Island, E-Comm's emergency communications centre in Vancouver can also answer overflow 9-1-1 calls originating from central and southern Vancouver Island.
- Consolidating emergency communications is about enhanced capacity to support increased safety for the public and first responders.

The Agencies

The South Island 9-1-1/Police Dispatch Centre provides call-taking and dispatch services for these police agencies on central and southern Vancouver Island:

- Central Saanich Police Service
- Central/Southern Vancouver Island RCMP detachments (11)
 - Integrated Roadside Safety Unit (IRSU)
 - Ladysmith
 - Lake Cowichan
 - North Cowichan/Duncan
 - Outer Gulf Island (includes Pender, Galiano and Mayne)
 - Salt Spring Island
 - Shawnigan Lake
 - Sidney/North Saanich
 - Sooke
 - South Island Traffic Services
 - West Shore (includes City of Langford, City of Colwood, Town of View Royal, District of Metchosin, District of Highlands, Songhees First Nation and Esquimalt First Nation)
- Oak Bay Police Department
- Saanich Police Department
- Victoria Police Department



About E-Comm

- E-Comm's emergency communications centre in Vancouver answered almost 1.6 million 9-1-1 calls across its various service areas in 2018. E-Comm answered 98 per cent of those calls in five seconds or less.
- With the addition of the Capital Regional District, E-Comm provides 9-1-1 call-answer services for 25 regional districts in B.C.
- With the addition of 11 RCMP detachments and four municipal police agencies on Vancouver Island, E-Comm provides dispatch services for 33 police agencies.
- E-Comm also provides dispatch services for 40 fire departments on the Sunshine Coast, the Squamish Lillooet Regional District, Metro Vancouver, the Fraser Valley Regional District and the Regional District of the North Okanagan.
- E-Comm will mark its 20th anniversary on June 8, 2019.

About the CRD

- The CRD is the regional government for 13 municipalities and three electoral areas on southern Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands, serving more than 392,000 residents.
- With more than 200 service, infrastructure and financing agreements with municipalities and electoral areas, the CRD plays a key role in providing services that can be delivered efficiently and effectively through region-wide or shared service delivery models.
- The South Island 9-1-1/Police Dispatch Centre project was initiated to provide a facility that meets post-disaster standards and fosters collaboration between partners for emergency response and management.
- The project also aimed to create opportunities for improved efficiencies and modernized equipment.

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