

# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT



# CORPORATE OVERVIEW

## WHO WE ARE

E-Comm was established in 1997 under the provincial Emergency Communications Corporations Act. As the primary emergency communication services agency for British Columbia, E-Comm has played a pivotal role in keeping British Columbians safe and helping to protect communities for more than 20 years. As the first, first responders, the E-Comm team provides a critical entry point to emergency response by working behind the scenes to connect people with police, fire and ambulance and maintaining the technology used by first responders.

On March 6, 2024, E-Comm marked the fifth anniversary of the organization's Vancouver Island call-taking and dispatch centre in Saanich. On June 8, 2024, E-Comm marked 25 years of providing emergency communications services in B.C.

## WHAT WE DO

### Wide-Area Radio Network

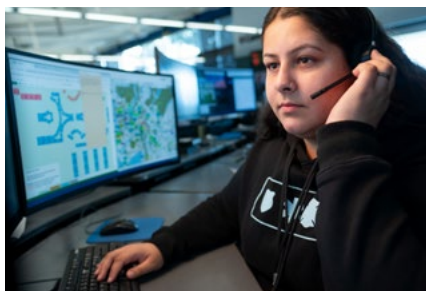
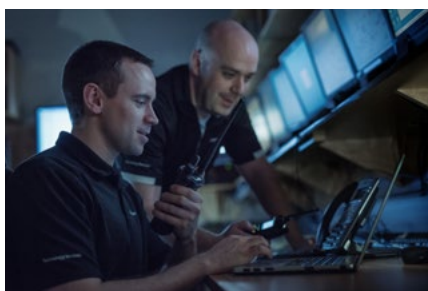
E-Comm owns and operates the largest multi-jurisdictional radio network of its kind in British Columbia. The system is highly resilient with multiple layers of redundancy to survive natural disasters of varying severities. Currently, BC Emergency Health Services, all police agencies and 18 fire departments in Metro Vancouver and Abbotsford use E-Comm's radio network to communicate their essential messages.

### Technology Services

E-Comm provides a variety of secure, mission-critical technology services that support its own operations and those of its public safety partners, including multi-jurisdictional computer-aided dispatch systems, records management systems and electronic mapping services. E-Comm's in-house Technology Services team has the depth and breadth of experience to support a diverse range of software, systems and platforms to ensure continuity of service 24/7.

### 9-1-1 Call-Answer, Police and Fire Dispatch Services

In 2023, E-Comm answered more than 2.34 million 9-1-1 calls on behalf of 25 regional districts throughout British Columbia. The organization currently provides dispatch services to 34 police agencies and 40 fire departments in B.C. E-Comm's consolidated, multi-jurisdictional dispatch provides the ability to deliver top-tier technology to smaller communities and enhanced mutual-aid possibilities which greatly enhance responder and public safety.



## VISION

Safer communities in British Columbia through excellence in public safety communications.

## MISSION

Deliver exceptional emergency communications to the public and first responders that help save lives and protect property.

## VALUES

Our values guide how we carry out our work. Developed and defined by our staff, we are proud of our values: Respect, Integrity, Collaboration, Accountability and Service.



A background photograph of a modern call center. In the foreground, a woman with short dark hair and a man with a headset are looking at two large curved computer monitors. The left monitor displays a satellite map of a mountainous region, and the right monitor shows a software interface with various data fields and a red header. The background is a blurred view of the rest of the call center, showing other workstations and bright overhead lighting.

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E-Comm published this Annual Report on June 20, 2024

# LEADERSHIP MESSAGE



## Gaining ground – the plan is working

2023 was truly a year of change and progress for E-Comm 9-1-1.

It marked the first full year of implementation of our new Transformation Plan—approved by E-Comm’s Board of Directors in November 2022 to modernize our operations and put the organization on a secure footing for the future.

The plan includes transformational improvements across our organization, to better meet the needs of our local government and agency partners, and the public we serve. The positive news is the plan is working. We are gaining ground toward our destination.

In particular, despite an 11 per cent increase in 9-1-1 call volumes in British Columbia in 2023, E-Comm achieved its best overall service levels of the past five years, for 9-1-1, police and fire emergency call-taking.

We exceeded our police emergency call-taking target (88 per cent of calls answered within 10 seconds) in the Lower Mainland for the first time since 2016. And we began long-overdue improvements to our Lower Mainland police non-emergency service levels, an area of continued focus in 2024.

Clearly, we still have much to do, to continue to improve our staffing, operations, technology, governance and financial sustainability for the future. Ongoing priorities for 2024 include the rollout of a detailed new five-year financial plan, recommended improvements to our board and corporate structure and financial governance, continued implementation of our new IP-based Next Generation 9-1-1 network, and collaboration with our government partners to secure a new provincial funding and standards for 9-1-1 in B.C.

It has been 25 years since E-Comm received its first emergency call in 1999. What hasn’t changed in that time is the exceptional commitment of our staff to protect the public safety of British Columbians.

With the continued support of our local government and agency partners, we will continue to strengthen and ensure sustainable emergency communications services for the future.

**Doug Campbell**, Board Chair

**Oliver Grüter-Andrew**, President and CEO

June 2024



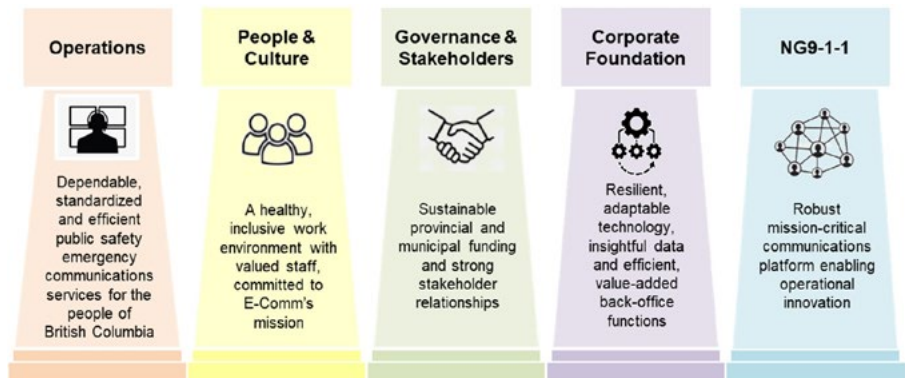
# TRANSFORMATION PLAN

E-Comm's Transformation Plan completed its first year with some encouraging results.

## 2023 HIGHLIGHTS

- **Strongest overall 9-1-1 and emergency call-taking service results in past 5 years** – E-Comm answered 98 per cent of 9-1-1 calls in less than five seconds provincially, despite an 11 per cent increase in 9-1-1 calls for police, fire, or ambulance.
- **Best police emergency call-taking service levels since 2016** – On behalf of the police agencies it serves, E-Comm exceeded service level targets for police emergency calls in the Lower Mainland, answering 89 per cent of police emergency calls within 10 seconds and met the target of 88 per cent on Vancouver Island. E-Comm also exceeded its service level for fire emergency, answering 93 per cent of fire emergency calls within 15 seconds.
- **Improving police non-emergency service levels** – 63 per cent of police non-emergency calls for Lower Mainland police agencies E-Comm serves were answered within three minutes or less (up from 44 per cent in 2022) with an average speed to answer of four minutes, down from almost 11 minutes in 2022. E-Comm met its service level of 80 per cent for non-emergency police calls on Vancouver Island. Improvements to police non-emergency call-taking service levels remain a key priority for E-Comm in 2024.

The five-year Transformation Plan has five pillars:

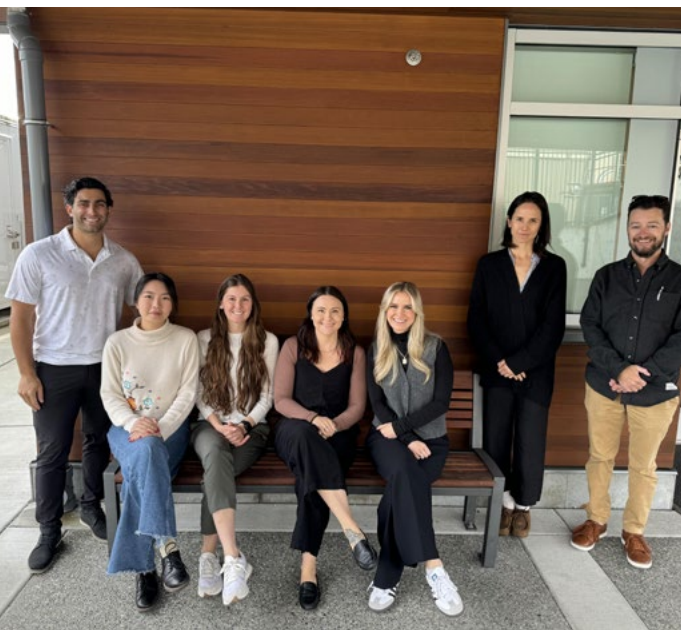


# 98%

OF 9-1-1 CALLS ANSWERED IN LESS  
THAN FIVE SECONDS PROVINCWIDE

## New teams, tech and training for non-emergency calls

E-Comm established a dedicated non-emergency call-taking team in 2023 to improve service to our communities. E-Comm collaborated with our policing partners to simplify and consolidate more than 1,500 standard operating procedures into under 100. This has streamlined training for our new call takers. All of these are among ongoing efforts to improve the police non-emergency call experience.



## Increased recruitment, retention and employee support

E-Comm hired more than 170 employees in 2023 to help improve operations, address long-standing capacity and skills gaps, and get staffing closer to the level necessary to meet targeted service levels consistently. An expanded peer coaching program provides enhanced support to new call takers and has improved retention by better on-the-job mentoring. E-Comm also concluded a new collective bargaining agreement and compensation review, with improved benefits and mental health supports, improving our ability to attract and retain great people.

## Next Generation 9-1-1

E-Comm is playing a lead role, working with the Province of B.C., local governments and partner agencies to support the federally-mandated implementation of “Next Generation” 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1) technology improvements. The program will move 9-1-1 voice calls to a new digital network. In March 2023, the Province of B.C. contributed \$90 million to E-Comm, to support the initial implementation, which represents a significant avoided cost for our local government and agency partners.







## Enhanced cybersecurity and business continuity

E-Comm continues to strengthen our redundancy capacity, including significant progress on our new data centre and the development of several cybersecurity projects to strengthen our business continuity and protections against cyber threats and data breaches.

## Improvements to data analytics to better support our agency partners

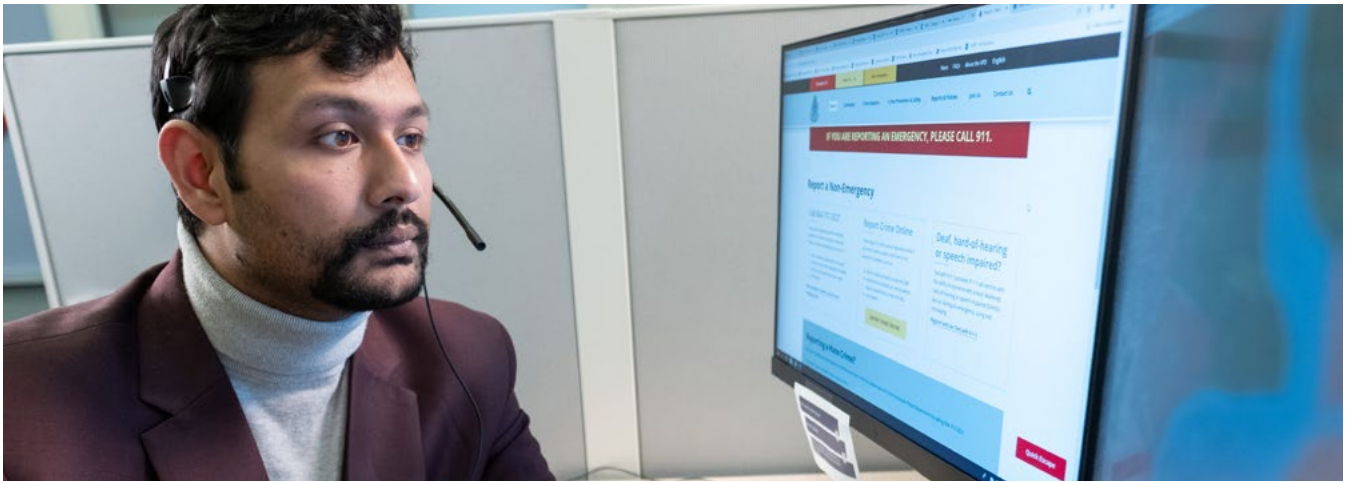
E-Comm implemented significant improvements to automate and enhance our data analytics and reporting to help identify opportunities to improve operations and provide our partners with better data.



## Comprehensive governance review

An independent review of E-Comm's corporate and governance structure was launched in 2023, with the goal of identifying opportunities for improvement. Key recommendations were made after extensive engagement with our local government and agency partners for review and implementation in 2025, pending approval from shareholders.

**[Read our full February 2024 Transformation Update here](#)**



# CALL VOLUMES

E-Comm answers 99 per cent of the province's 9-1-1 calls. In 2023, E-Comm's provincial 9-1-1 call volume was 2,342,892 calls. Our call takers answered 98 per cent of those calls in less than five seconds. Call volumes below are for E-Comm's police and fire agency partners—agencies for which we provide dispatch services.

A list of these agencies is available [here](#).

**63%**  
CALLS FOR POLICE

**30%**  
CALLS FOR AMBULANCE

**7%**  
CALLS FOR FIRE

**688,058**

**POLICE EMERGENCY CALLS**

Lower Mainland: 89 per cent of calls answered within 10 seconds  
Vancouver Island: 88 per cent of calls answered within 10 seconds

**122,224**

**FIRE EMERGENCY CALLS**

93 per cent of fire emergency calls answered within 15 seconds

**548,501**

**POLICE NON-EMERGENCY CALLS**

Lower Mainland: 63 per cent of calls answered within three minutes  
Vancouver Island: 80 per cent of calls answered within three minutes

**25,772**

**FIRE NON-EMERGENCY CALLS**

99.9 per cent of calls answered within three minutes



**83%**  
OF 9-1-1 CALLS  
RECEIVED  
FROM CELLPHONES

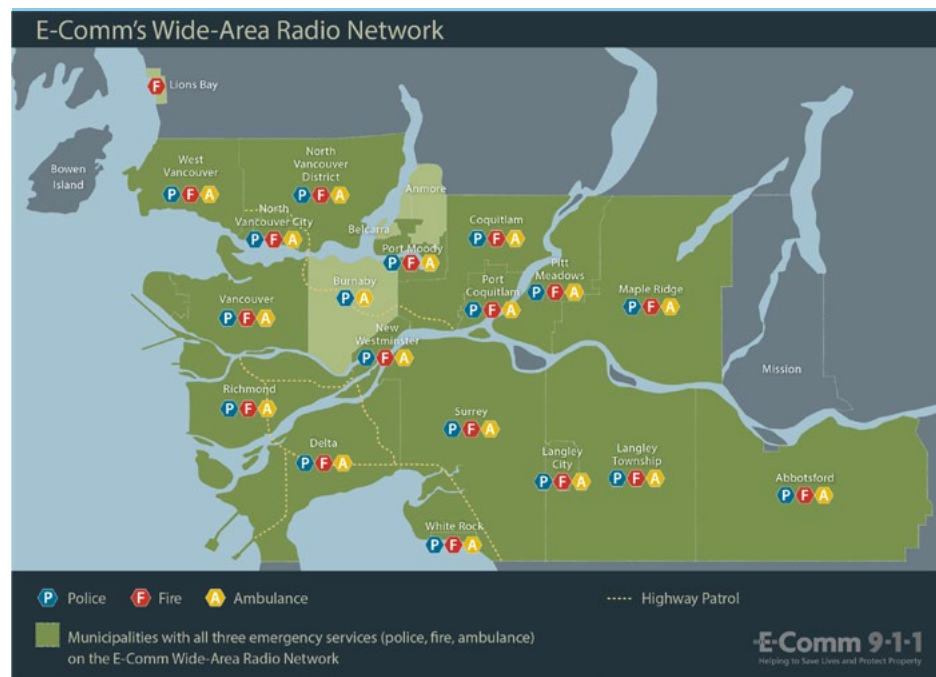


**17%**  
OF 9-1-1 CALLS  
RECEIVED  
FROM LANDLINES



# E-COMM WIDE-AREA RADIO NETWORK

The E-Comm Wide-Area Radio Network is the largest multi-jurisdictional, tri-service emergency radio system in B.C. Police, fire and ambulance personnel within Metro Vancouver and parts of the Fraser Valley use the network. The E-Comm radio system provides better coverage, greater clarity and improved reliability through an earthquake resistant infrastructure and enhanced security. The multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional communication capabilities have already played a critical role in the successful conclusion of several police pursuits and cross municipal-border crime investigations.



## E-COMM WIDE-AREA RADIO NETWORK IN 2023

On August 14, 2023, TransLink operating companies—Coast Mountain Bus Company and BC Rapid Transit Company—joined the E-Comm Wide-Area Radio Network. This marks a milestone for public transit in Metro Vancouver, as SkyTrain, SeaBus and bus operators are now able to communicate seamlessly with Metro Vancouver Transit Police and other emergency service agencies already on the E-Comm's multi-jurisdictional emergency radio system.

**100 per cent network availability**

**55,595,176 transmissions on the network**

**330,108,358 seconds of air time**

**14,982 radios provisioned on the network**

**More than 40 agencies on the network**

# FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

## STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS AND NET ASSETS

	2023	2022
Revenue	\$ 120,902,499	\$ 97,272,686
Direct operating expenses	110,984,721	89,431,619
	9,917,778	7,841,067
Other expenses		
Amortization and other	6,048,634	6,413,118
Interest on long-term debt	5,628,840	4,187,892
	11,677,474	10,601,010
Deficiency of revenue over expenses	(1,759,696)	(2,759,943)
Unrestricted net assets, beginning of year	(5,440,022)	(2,680,079)
Unrestricted net assets (deficit), end of year	\$ (7,199,718)	\$ (5,440,022)

E-Comm ended the year with a deficiency of revenue over expenses of \$1.8 million and a cumulative deficit of \$7.2 million. As radio system revenue and other revenue lines are on a cost recovery basis, this net deficit is attributable to police dispatch operations. The year over year changes are primarily in salaries and benefits expense and are largely attributable to an investment in staff training and development in the first quarter of the year and increased staffing requirements associated with higher than anticipated call volumes.

E-Comm's Wide-Area Radio Network members saw lower actual 2023 capital and operating expenditures compared to budget. These surpluses will be directed to the radio reserve to offset future costs. The savings are due to decreases in operating costs (mainly in radio salaries and direct overhead costs), better investment returns on bank accounts and Municipal Finance Authority of BC (MFA) loan actuarial interest and decreases in allocated costs.

E-Comm's radio, technology and contracted services continued to demonstrate the financial and operational benefits realized with consolidation, optimization and economies of scale.

In 2023, E-Comm continued a significant investment in human resources, innovation and technology projects required for the organization to evolve to meet the current expectations and future needs of our public safety partners. Additionally, E-Comm received a provincial grant of \$90 million from the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General to support the implementation of the NG9-1-1 network.

The dispatch levy increases for 2024 are higher than the historical average increases as follows: 22 per cent for Lower Mainland (LMD) police dispatch; 10 per cent for LMD fire dispatch plus an additional 7 per cent for additional resources as requested by the Fire Dispatch Committee, for a total of 17 per cent for LMD fire dispatch, and 24 per cent for Vancouver Island (VI) police dispatch. E-Comm is continuing to focus on the steps necessary to get our Operations division back on a sustainable path—financially, operationally and organizationally. Discussions are ongoing with our partner agencies to ensure we align funding with growth in volume and the nature and complexity of the calls and activities, which results in a need for increased resourcing to support dispatch service delivery and related service level targets.

The aggregated radio levy increase in 2023 is 9 per cent<sup>1</sup>. Radio levies continue to provide a sustainable means of funding for technology evolution of this mission critical asset.

Full copies of E-Comm's 2023 Audited Financial Statements, including the Auditor's Report to the Shareholders and Notes to the Financial Statements are available [on our website](#).

<sup>1</sup>Adjusted for new agency participation; actual shared levy increases will vary by agency based on their specific metrics, such as actual number of radios.



# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

A 23-member Board of Directors is responsible for overseeing the company's strategic direction, finances and operating results. Management is accountable to the Board of Directors for the day-to-day operations and administration of the Corporation.

The members of the Board of Directors, largely nominated by E-Comm shareholders, provide extensive knowledge and experience to the Corporation through their work on the Board and as members of the Board's standing committees. These committees are the Finance committee, the People & Culture committee, the Governance and Public Affairs committee and the Transformation Oversight Taskforce. In addition, E-Comm ensures that it meets its partners' needs through User and Service committees comprised of representatives from police, fire and ambulance.

## 2023-24 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Name	Position	Nominated By
Doug Campbell	Board Chair and Independent Director	
Aniz Alani	Director	City of Abbotsford
Tim Baillie	Director	Cities of Langley, Surrey and White Rock, Township of Langley (Seat 1 of 2)
Mike Bhatti	Director	RCMP
Rod Dewar	Independent Director	
Steve Eely	Director	Vancouver Police Board
Kash Heed	Director	City of Richmond
Leanne Heppell	Director	BC Emergency Health Services
Angela Kaiser	Independent Director	
Nancy Kotani	Independent Director	
Dylan Kruger	Director	City of Delta/Delta Police Board
Meghan Lahti	Director	Cities of Burnaby, Coquitlam, New Westminster, Port Coquitlam, Port Moody, Village of Belcarra (Seat 1 of 2)
Karen Levitt	Director	City of Vancouver
Mike Little	Director	City of North Vancouver, District of North Vancouver, District of West Vancouver, Village of Lions Bay
Kevin Lorette	Director	Capital Regional District and E-Comm's Southern Vancouver Island Police Agency Partners
George Madden	Director	Independent Police Boards (Abbotsford, New Westminster, Port Moody, Transit Police, West Vancouver)
Nancy McCurrach	Director	Cities of Burnaby, New West, Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam and Port Moody, Village of Belcarra (Seat 2 of 2)
Denise Nawata	Independent Director	
Kurt Pregler	Director	Metro Vancouver and TransLink
Dan Ruimy	Director	Cities of Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows
Doug Scott	Director	Provincial Government
Susan Stanford	Director	Provincial Government
Terry Waterhouse	Director	Cities of Langley, Surrey, and White Rock, Township of Langley (Seat 2 of 2)

# EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

Name	Position
Oliver Grüter-Andrew	President and Chief Executive Officer
Nancy Blair	Chief Transformation Officer
Li-Jeen Broshko	Vice-President, Legal and Governance
Greg Conner	Vice-President, People and Culture
Dave Cunningham	Vice-President, Communications and Public Affairs
Tony Gilligan	Vice-President, Technology Services
Al Horsman	Vice-President, Finance and Chief Financial Officer
Ladan Irannejad	Executive Director, Data, Analytics and Decision Support
Tracy Lim	Executive Director, Operations Transformation and Enablement
Stephen Thatcher	Vice-President, Operations
Darcy Wilson	Executive Director, Emergency Communications Centres



# 2023 AT A GLANCE

- 2.3+ million 9-1-1 calls
- 688,058 police emergency calls
- 122,224 fire emergency calls
- 548,501 police non-emergency calls
- 25,772 fire non-emergency calls
- 55.5+ million transmissions on radio network



**ECOMM911.CA**

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