

***I cut myself,  
I am bleeding badly...***

***I think I am having a  
heart attack...***

***Help my baby's not  
breathing...***

***I just got stung by a  
bee, my throat feels  
funny...***



**MCSA**

Massachusetts Communications  
Supervisors Association

***I think my friend  
is choking, what  
should I do...***

## **An Emergency Medical Dispatch Primer**

prepared by MCSA to help guide you through:

**Selecting an EMD Program or Third Party Resource  
Setting Up the Program • Offering Tips to Ensure Success**

**The public expects help when calling 9-1-1.**

**The first, “first responder” for an emergency is the  
Telecommunicator/Call Taker receiving the emergency call.**

In today's society it is expected that the Telecommunicator will offer help to the person on the other end of the phone, not just say “help is on the way” and hang up.

This is where **Emergency Medical Dispatch “EMD”** can provide the link to gathering information from the caller, updating the responders, providing pre-arrival and post-dispatch instructions to the caller while the caller is waiting for help to arrive.

Through pre-scripted cards and software programs, the Telecommunicator can provide:

- **CPR**
- **Airway Obstruction**
- **Basic First Aid**
- **Patient Comfort Instructions**

While asking pre-scripted questions the Telecommunicator is also gathering pertinent information to update the responders.

**There are 3 Parts to Emergency Medical Dispatch Program  
Dispatch • Pre-Arrival Instructions • Quality Review & Assurance**

# EMD Planning Considerations

MA911.org

Designate a person to plan and start up the Emergency Medical Dispatching (EMS) program. Be sure to include the dispatch supervisor, head dispatcher, or another dispatcher with experience in PSAP operations and call taking.

Read the EMD regulations on the State 911 Department web page.

The State 911 Department regulations allow two choices:

- Perform EMD in your primary PSAP
- Have EMD performed by transferring and/or conferencing in another location that is a certified "EMD Resource" approved by the State 911 Department.

An EMD resource could be your Secondary PSAP, another PSAP, a Regional PSAP or even an EMD provider that is certified as an EMD Resource.

If you choose to provide EMD in your primary PSAP you will need to:

- Choose a Medical Director following the guidelines in the State 911 EMD Regulations. This person could be the same MD that oversees your EMS system, which would help for integration of EMD as the true first component of your EMS services. Some PSAPs include the Medical Director in choosing an EMD Program, others consult with one after choosing their EMD Program.
- Choose one State 911 Department certified EMD Protocol System.  
Examples of systems - that may be certified: APCO, Priority Dispatch and Powerphone.
- Speak with other PSAPs already using an EMD Protocol System and get their advice
- Get demos of the different systems and see which style best fits
- Consider the software systems and how they can integrate with your CAD
- Acquire the card sets and/or the software to perform EMD
- Train (or have trained) all 911 telecommunicators for initial training or certification of the EMD Protocol System.
- Create your quality control program following the guidelines from your EMD vendor

If your PSAP has only 1 person on duty on a particular shift, you may be concerned that they cannot perform Emergency Medical Dispatching while doing the many other tasks required for dispatch radio alert and support.

This is a serious and justified concern but note:

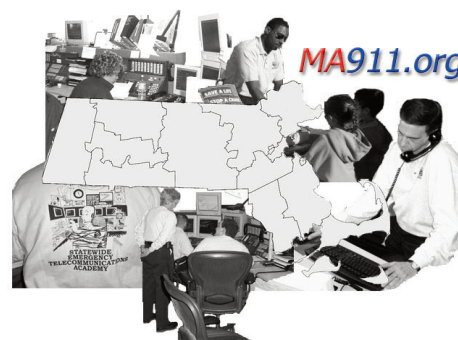
**Many 1 person PSAPs  
can and do use an  
EMD system successfully.**

Reach out to them to get pointers and advice.

The Massachusetts State 911 Department EMD regulations do not mandate the specific steps that must be followed in processing an EMD call; that is left to the protocol system which is adopted by your PSAP.

In the quite rare case where a caller needs you to provide life-saving pre-arrival instructions (such as CPR / Heimlich), you may have to let subsequent 911 calls roll over to your backup. The proposed State 911 Department regulations provide for exigent circumstances. Your 911 Backup should provide EMD services to the caller.

# Things to consider:



- **Who will be designated to review your EMD calls,** include that person in the selection process and implementation process
- **How many EMD calls will be reviewed and in what time frame**
- How Call Reviews can be used as helpful / skill-building tools; rather than as negative tools used in the disciplinary process.
- Send your QA review person to training, consider acquiring Quality Assurance software if it is offered by your EMD protocol system vendor.

## Create an EMD policy with a description of:

- **Call taking**
- **EMD operation**
- **EMD quality control methods**

## Keep in mind, you need to get your EMS service (Fire and or ambulance provider) involved!

*For example:*

Most EMD systems treat calls as one of 15 to 20 or so general types (e.g., heart attack, bleeding, choking, etc.) and then proceed to ask a set of 3-5 quick questions to gauge the severity of the injury or illness. Based on that quick “triage”, a differential set of responders will be dispatched. Thus, in a routine non-emergent case of a cut on the hand a BLS unit would be sent without the need for excessive speed; whereas in the case of an arterial bleed with the blood gushing out and partial entrapment an entire group of response units will be sent.

These decisions must be made, agreed, and understood by the dispatch personnel as well as the responders and built into the EMD system’s guidelines.

If you are considering using an EMD Resource please refer to the State 911 Department proposed regulations for these requirements.

At a minimum the EMD Resource must have:

- an approved EMD Vendor
- call takers trained in 911 and EMD
- ANI-ALI
- a Quality Assurance program

Once the State 911 Department EMD Regulations are in effect you will need to have your EMD program certified by the State 911 Department.

*Emergency Medical Dispatching is not one-time EMD training in the use of card sets that sit up on a shelf unused.*

*The State 911 Department Regulations are serious about developing and using a full featured EMD system that will require documentation of Quality Assurance Component and Recertification (usually every 2 years).*

*MCSA has been told future grants will be conditioned on EMD regulation compliance.*



## **SUMMARY AND OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED REGULATIONS ESTABLISHING CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR ENHANCED 911 TELECOMMUNICATORS, GOVERNING EMERGENCY MEDICAL DISPATCH, AND ESTABLISHING 911 CALL HANDLING PROCEDURES**

### **Certification Requirements:**

- Applies to full-time and part-time E911 telecommunicators at primary PSAPs, regional PSAPs, regional secondary PSAPs (except if operated by a private safety department), secondary PSAPs (except if operated by a private safety department), RECC, and wireless state police PSAPs, effective 7/1/2011.
- New E911 telecommunicators: 2 day 911 equipment and basic telecommunicator training offered by the State 911 Department (Department) ; 40 hours of Department - approved basic telecommunicator training, and 16 hours of Department-approved continuing education annually.
- Existing Certified E911 telecommunicators: 16 hours of Department-approved continuing education annually commencing 7/1/2012.

### **Emergency Medical Dispatch Requirements:**

- By 7/1/2012, PSAPs/RECCs must provide EMD either through certified EMD dispatchers at the PSAP/RECC or through a certified EMD resource.
- The PSAP/RECC or certified EMD resource must use a single EMD Protocol Reference System (EMDPRS) on every request for medical assistance; have policies and procedures for use of EMDPRS, and establish a continuous quality assurance (QA) program.
- In order to act as a certified EMD dispatcher for a PSAP/RECC, must be certified E911 telecommunicator; obtain and maintain CPR certification; and obtain and maintain EMD certification.
- In order to act as a certified EMD resource for a PSAP/RECC, must submit request for approval to the Department that includes the EMDPRS that will be used and documentation that each EMD dispatcher has met training and certification requirements.

### **Call Handling Procedures:**

- Updated to allow for third transfer and to conform to current practices.

### **Recordkeeping:**

- PSAPs/RECCs required to ensure that E911 telecommunicators are certified as required by regulations and to annually submit documentation of same.
- PSAPs/RECCs required to annually certify to the Department that they meet the EMD requirements of the regulations.
- Certified EMD resource required to annually certify to the Department that it meets the requirements of the regulations.