

**Telecommunications Policy Committee  
Minutes  
September 7, 2006**

The Telecommunications Policy Committee of the Board on Public Safety Standards and Training held a regular meeting on September 7, 2006 at the Oregon Public Safety Academy in Salem, Oregon. Chair Eric Swanson called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

**Attendees**

Committee Members:

Eric Swanson, Public Safety Telecommunicators, Chair  
Mark Metcalf, Oregon State Sheriffs' Association (by teleconference)  
Randy Jackson, Oregon Fire Medical Administrators' Association  
Scott Russell, Oregon Association Chiefs of Police  
James Rentz, Oregon State Police  
Bob Cozzie, Clackamas County Communications  
Elizabeth E. Morgan, Emergency Medical Services and Trauma Systems (by teleconference)  
Leslie Senger, Association of Public Safety Communications Officers

Committee Members Absent:

Corey Henderson, Public Safety Telecommunicators  
Ted Kunze, Oregon Fire Chiefs' Association

DPSST Staff:

Eriks Gabliks, Deputy Director  
Pam Collett, Telecommunications Program Coordinator  
Tammera Hinshaw, Executive Assistant



**1. Minutes of August 3, 2006 Meeting**

*Randy Jackson moved to approve the minutes of the August 3, 2006 Telecommunications Policy Committee meeting. Scott Russell seconded the motion. The motion carried in a unanimous vote.*

**2. Proposed Rule OAR 259-008-0011**

Medical Standards for Telecommunicators/EMD

This item was held over from the August 3, 2006 meeting. The committee had agreed to review the rule further and vote on it at the meeting in September.

**Issue:** This review was undertaken because there were no medical standards previously in effect for Telecommunicators and Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) personnel.

A Job Task Analysis was previously conducted and identified essential tasks related to Telecommunicators and EMD's to ensure the Department's program is in compliance with the American Disabilities Act (ADA) standards related to certification. A medical panel at Oregon Health Sciences University, comprised of an Ophthalmologist, a Cardiovascular specialist and an Audiologist, developed standards and made recommendations for entry-level applicants.

The National Emergency Number Association (NENA) Accessibility Committee and Human Resources Sub-Committee recently established ADA-compliant hearing standards for public safety telecommunicators. This standard is intended to provide reasonable and defensible industry accepted minimum hearing standards and establish recommended audiometric testing policies. The full text of the standard is attached as Exhibit "A." The Department also recommends adopting the visual acuity standards previously recommended by the OHSU medical panel for telecommunicators and emergency medical dispatchers.

The Department consulted with OHSU Clinical Audiology and was advised that the NENA standard will meet or exceed the previously recommended OHSU hearing standards for Telecommunicators and EMD personnel. OHSU also recommended that the audiology test be taken within six months of employment.

The following recommended language for (6) through (12) contains the additions (**bold and underlined text**) to the current minimum standards for employment if the Committee approves moving forward with the proposed rule language:

**259-008-0011**

### **Minimum Standards for Employment as a Telecommunicator and Emergency Medical Dispatcher**

#### **(6) Physical Examination. All Telecommunicators and Emergency Medical Dispatcher applicants must be examined by a licensed physician.**

**(a) The medical examination must be completed not more than 180 days prior to initial offer of employment, nor more than 90 days after initial offer of employment, and must conform to applicable standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Title 42 USC 12101.**

**(b) Individuals who have had a successfully completed physical examination (while at the same employer) and are selected for a certifiable position in a discipline in which the individual is not yet certified must complete and pass a new physical examination.**

**(c) The Department will not require a new physical examination when a Telecommunicator or Emergency Medical Dispatcher obtains employment, or re-employment, in the same discipline if the Telecommunicator or Emergency Medical Dispatcher:**

**(A) Has had a successfully completed a physical examination, and**

**(B) Is currently certified; or**

**(C) Is currently employed full-time in another jurisdiction and has successfully completed a comparable physical examination in that jurisdiction.**

**(d) Notwithstanding subsection (c), a medical examination may be required by a hiring agency at its discretion.**

**(e) Telecommunicator and Emergency Medical Dispatcher applicants must meet the following criteria:**

**(A) Visual Acuity. Corrected vision must be at least 20/30 (Snellen) when tested using both eyes together.**

**(B) Color Vision. Red or green deficiencies may be acceptable, providing the applicant can read at least nine (9) of the first thirteen (13) plates of the Ishihara Test (24 Plate Edition). Applicants who fail the Ishihara test can meet the color vision standard by demonstrating that they can correctly discriminate colors via a field test conducted by the employer and approved by DPSST.**

**(C) Peripheral Vision. Visual Field Performance must be 120 degrees in the horizontal meridian combined.**

**(f) Applicants for the position of Telecommunicator or Emergency Medical Dispatcher must have sufficient hearing in both ears to perform essential tasks without posing a direct threat to themselves or others. The applicant must meet National Emergency Number Association (NENA) hearing standard 54-002 (June 10, 2006).**

**(g) Applicants for the position of Telecommunicator or Emergency Medical Dispatcher must be able to use vocal cords and have significant speaking ability to perform speaking-related essential tasks.**

**(7) If further medical examination is required, it will be at the expense of the applicant or the hiring authority.**

**(8) All Telecommunicator and Emergency Medical Dispatcher applicants must submit a current-version DPSST Medical Examination Report for Telecommunicators and Emergency Medical Dispatchers (DPSST Form F-2T), or a medical report completed by a licensed physician containing at a minimum the information on Form F-2T. This Report will be furnished to the examining physician by the hiring agency.**

**(9) A copy of the Medical Examination Report must be sent to the Department prior to acceptance into a basic course, or any course where such report is required by the Department.**

**(10) The Department may require an applicant offered conditional employment to take a subsequent examination by a licensed physician of the Department's choice at the expense of the applicant or the hiring authority.**

**(11) The Board may waive any physical requirement where, in its judgment, the waiver would not be detrimental to the performance of a Telecommunicator or Emergency Medical Dispatcher's duties. The applicant may be required to demonstrate the ability to perform the essential functions of the job.**

**(12) A person or department head requesting a waiver of any physical requirement set forth in section (11) of this rule must submit the request to the Department in writing, accompanied by supporting documents or pertinent testimony which would justify the action requested. The supporting documents must include information pertinent to the waiver request. The Board or Department may require additional documentation or testimony by the person or department head requesting the waiver if clarification is needed. Any expense associated with providing documentation or testimony will be borne by the person requesting the waiver or the requesting agency. If the person requesting the waiver does not obtain employment within one (1) year from the date a waiver is granted, the waiver will be considered void. If the Board grants a waiver, it will be recorded on the certification and any subsequent certification unless removed by the Board upon proof that the condition prompting the waiver no longer exists.**

**ACTION ITEM 1:** Determine whether to recommend filing the proposed language for OAR 259-008-0011 with the Secretary of State as a proposed rule.

*Randy Jackson moved to recommend filing the proposed language with the Secretary of State as a proposed rule. Bob Cozzie seconded the motion. The motion carried in a unanimous vote.*

**ACTION ITEM 2:** Determine whether to recommend filing the proposed language for OAR 259-008-0011 with the Secretary of State as a permanent rule if no comments are received.

*Randy Jackson moved to recommend filing the proposed language with the Secretary of State as a permanent rule if no comments are received. Bob Cozzie seconded the motion. The motion carried in a unanimous vote.*

**ACTION ITEM 3:** Pursuant to HB 3238, determine whether there is a significant fiscal impact on small businesses.

*The Committee agreed that there could be some impact on small businesses as cost will vary dependent upon availability of testing.*

### **3. Proposed Rule OAR 259-012**

Administrative Rules Relating to Student Conduct

**Issue:** The Department has revised the standards relating to Student Conduct. In order to enforce the new rules and regulations with an effective implementation date of July 1, 2006, when the Department moved to the new Academy, the Department filed temporary

rules relating to student conduct while the permanent rulemaking process took place. Additional formatting revisions were also made for clarity and readability.

A temporary rule is in effect for a period of six (6) months from the date of filing. Approval to file a temporary rule was made by the Executive Committee on June 8, 2006 to allow the respective Policy Committees time to present a proposed permanent rule to the Board. If the Board approves the proposed permanent rule, the proposed rule will be filed with the Secretary of State and open for comment. If no comments are received, or if no hearing is held, the Department will file the rule as permanent.

On August 3, 2006, the Telecommunications Policy Committee met and recommended filing the proposed rule revisions. On August 9, 2006, the Police Policy Committee met and also reviewed staff's proposed language amendments. Based on discussions, further revisions were recommended to eliminate OAR 259-012-0020, 259-012-0025 and 259-012-0030 because the language is currently duplicated in the Department's rules and regulations governing student conduct. Additionally, staff amended a portion of OAR 259-012-0015 relating to weapons and eliminated the remainder of that section. The following proposed language contains the revised recommended deletions (~~striktthrough text~~) and additions (**bold and underlined text**).

Proposed Rule Amendments to Oregon Administrative Rule 259-012-005 through 259-012-0035 (including Police Policy Committee recommendations).

## DIVISION 12

### OREGON PUBLIC SAFETY ACADEMY

#### 259-012-0005

##### Attendance

(1) The Oregon Public Safety Academy is open to all eligible personnel upon application from their employing agencies. All persons attending the courses may live in the dormitories provided, or, with the permission of their department, they may commute to classes. Reasonable fees may be charged to cover operating costs of the Academy for those attending courses that are not mandatory, and for persons not defined as corrections, parole and probation, **emergency medical dispatchers, telecommunicators** or police officers under [ORS 181.610](#). Additionally, fees may be charged **to** an agency under the Act if they do not adhere to minimum standards as defined in OAR 259-008-0010. Application for Training (**BPSST Form F-5**) ~~shall~~ **must** be used to apply for Mandated courses. Other courses presented at the Oregon Public Safety Academy may be announced through mailed course announcements with response required prior to established deadlines.

(2) Students ~~shall~~ **must** obtain permission from their employing agency before attending any optional classes offered at the Academy.

(3) Admission to the Oregon Public Safety Academy may be denied to ~~these~~ **any** persons who **does** not meet the minimum employment standards as established by OAR 259-008-0010.

(4) Selection criteria for Academy training courses sponsored by the Department will be as follows:

(a) Mandated Basic Training:

(A) For mandated basic training, first priority for acceptance will be granted to ~~persons from agencies which come~~ **public safety personnel identified** under the mandatory provisions of [ORS 181.610](#), 181.640, 181.644, 181.652, 181.653, and 181.665.

(B) Second priority will be granted to persons from public or private safety agencies ~~which do not come~~ **who are not identified** under the mandatory provisions of [ORS 181.610](#), 181.640, 181.644, 181.652, 181.653, and 181.665.

(C) Third priority will be granted to persons from other public or non-public agencies or organizations. These decisions will be made after reviewing course content, candidates' job assignments, and following established Department policy.

(b) Supervisory and Middle Management Training:

(A) First priority for acceptance into the mandated supervisory and middle management courses will be granted to ~~persons from agencies which come~~ **public safety personnel identified** under the mandatory provisions of [ORS 181.610](#), 181.640, 181.644, 181.652, 181.653, and 181.665. These persons must be designated as supervisors or middle managers by the assigning officials.

(B) Second priority will be granted to designated supervisors or middle managers from other public or private safety agencies.

(C) Third priority will be granted to persons from agencies which come under the mandatory provisions of [ORS 181.610](#), 181.640, 181.644, 181.652, 181.653, and 181.665 and are not designated as supervisors or middle managers.

(D) Fourth priority will be granted to persons from other public or private safety agencies who are not designated as supervisors or middle managers.

(E) Fifth priority will be granted to persons from other public or non-public agencies or organizations. These decisions will be made after reviewing candidates' job assignments and following established Department policy.

(c) Executive Level Training:

(A) First priority for acceptance into executive level courses will be granted to command officers ~~from agencies which come~~ **identified** under the mandatory provisions of [ORS 181.610](#), 181.640, 181.644, 181.652, 181.653, and 181.665.

(B) Second priority will be granted to command officers from other public or private safety agencies.

(C) Third priority will be granted to persons ~~from agencies which come~~ **identified** under the mandatory provisions of [ORS 181.610](#), 181.640, 181.644, 181.652, 181.653, and 181.665 and are not command officers.

(D) Fourth priority will be granted to persons from other public or private safety agencies who are not command officers.

(E) Fifth priority will be granted to persons from other public or non-public agencies or organizations. These decisions will be made after reviewing candidates' job assignments and following established Department policy.

(d) Advanced and Specialized Training:

(A) First priority for acceptance into advanced and specialized courses will be granted to ~~persons from agencies which come~~ **public safety personnel identified** under the mandatory provisions of [ORS 181.610](#), 181.640, 181.644, 181.652, 181.653, and 181.665, except as noted in paragraph (D) of this subsection.

(B) Second priority will be granted to persons from other public or private safety agencies.

(C) Third priority will be granted to persons from other public or non-public agencies or organizations. These decisions will be made after reviewing candidates' job assignments and following established Department policy.

(D) Acceptance criteria for certain specialized courses will vary from these listed priorities due to the specific nature of the courses, ~~and/or~~ **or** special entrance criteria established by the Department or a co-sponsoring organization or agency.

[ED. NOTE: The Form referenced in this rule is not printed in the OAR Compilation. Copies are available from the agency.]

## **259-012-0010**

### **Standards of Conduct**

(1) All students shall **must** report to the Academy at the time designated in the course announcement or the Department's letter accepting their attendance to ~~the~~ **a** specific course, unless prior arrangements have been made with Academy staff.

**(2) All students must adhere to the Department's rules and regulations governing student conduct. The student rules and regulations will be made available to:**

**(a) All students during initial orientation; and**

**(b) The public through electronic transmission or internet access.**

**(3) Any person residing at the Academy or attending specialized or advanced courses is prohibited from possessing weapons, including firearms and chemical agents, in the dormitory sleeping areas.**

~~(2) Students shall attend all classes as scheduled and shall not leave the Academy facility during class training sessions without first obtaining permission to be absent, from the Academy staff. Students shall fill out an absence slip and turn it in to the class coordinator prior to the absence. This slip shall include a notation of where they may be reached in the event of an emergency. Students will check in with the class coordinator and/or administrator upon their return to the Academy.~~

~~(3) Motor vehicles shall be parked within indicated parking areas only. Motor vehicles of any type parked in driveways, walkways, or other such areas will be towed away at the owner's expense.~~

~~(4) Clothing worn by students will be neat, clean, and serviceable. Students in basic police and corrections courses shall wear uniforms issued by the employing agency. The Academy may issue clothing for skills training. Casual clothing is acceptable unless otherwise advised by Academy staff. Cut-offs, shorts of any kind, tank tops, thongs, 'tee' shirts without collars, and hats are not permitted to be worn in the classroom. Imprinted shirts or tops, or other items of apparel that may be considered extreme or in poor taste, are not permitted. Athletic or running style shoes are acceptable if they are neat, clean and in good repair. Sweat suits are allowed if it is necessary for health and fitness activities or defensive tactics training.~~

~~(5) Students shall be held responsible for any Academy and/or college property entrusted to them. A replacement fee will be assessed for any such property lost, damaged, or not returned. Non-payment of these replacement fees may be cause for the Department to withhold completion certificates or course credit.~~

~~(6) Smoking will not be permitted any place inside the Academy buildings or dormitory, in the Food Service Building, or in any other location so posted. Smoking is restricted to certain designated areas on the Academy grounds.~~

~~(7) Alcoholic beverages shall not be possessed or consumed in the dormitory or any part of the Academy, or on the Western Oregon University campus at any time. Students will refrain from consuming alcoholic beverages or using any medication at any time to the extent that it results in impairment or renders the students unfit to perform required duties, including classroom attendance and participation, while at the Academy.~~

~~(8) Students shall maintain in their possession at all times any prescription label for a controlled substance and/or any other medication prescribed by competent medical authority, and notify the appropriate Academy staff of said prescription prior to reporting to Academy training functions.~~

~~(9) Personal telephone calls by student residents are not permitted on Academy telephone lines unless of an emergency or official business nature, and the caller has prior approval from Academy staff. Students should inquire at the reception center for access to a telephone.~~

~~(10) Roofs and roof areas of all buildings are off limits to students. Safety regulations and damage to roofing materials necessitates strict adherence. Any articles or sports equipment lost on a roof will be retrieved by the maintenance staff.~~

~~(11) Students shall not bring visitors into the classroom at any time without the prior approval of Academy staff.~~

~~(12) After classroom hours, visitors are permitted in the dormitory lounge area only. All visitors must be personally supervised by the student inviting them into the dormitory building. All visitors must leave the building by 10:00 p.m. For security reasons, no persons are allowed in the sleeping areas except those persons currently enrolled in the Academy.~~

~~(13) Students shall not divulge the combination to the night lock to any person not a student at the Academy.~~

~~(14) For safety and security reasons, no outside access door leading into the Academy or any dormitory will be blocked open in any manner unless done by an Academy staff member.~~

~~(15) Students are not permitted to move into or sleep in any dormitory room other than the one assigned without prior Academy staff approval. Male students and/or residents will not be allowed in the female quarters, and the female students and/or residents will not be allowed in male quarters unless on a specific training assignment and/or with prior approval of Academy staff.~~

~~(16) Students will be responsible for cleanliness of their dormitory rooms, which are subject to inspection by Academy staff. All students shall assist in keeping the dormitory lounges, coffee room, classrooms and outside areas clean. Student clean up and other necessary details will be assigned by the Academy staff.~~

~~(17) No tape, tacks, pins, or adhesive items of any type will be placed on walls, ceilings, doors, or woodwork. Placing items such as posters or arials on outside of buildings is not allowed. No items shall be placed on windows, window sills or the building that are within public view.~~

~~(18) The use of flammable items such as plastic or cardboard is prohibited for use as trash containers.~~

~~(19) The use of appliances for cooking or heating is prohibited in dormitory rooms. Electric blankets are also not allowed.~~

~~(20) All damage to dormitory rooms or any Academy property will be replaced or repaired by the maintenance department and the student(s) who damaged the property will be charged the full cost. No paint is to be applied to any areas by students, nor are areas to be covered with any adhesive material. The use of contact paper is also prohibited.~~

~~(21) Fire drills may be held periodically and student participation in immediate building evacuation is mandatory.~~

~~(22) The Department assigned staff member(s) shall have authority to determine who attends any course presented at the Academy and is delegated authority to immediately terminate the attendance of any student from any such class if that student engages in disruptive behavior or prohibited activity as defined in these rules.~~

~~(23) Persons attending classes at the Academy shall abide by the rules and regulations of the student's own employing agency that are not in conflict with these Oregon Public Safety Academy Rules.~~

~~(24) Students shall not engage in any activity that would be in violation of any law of the State of Oregon or the United States.~~

~~(25) Students shall not participate in loud, boisterous, or unruly activity in or adjacent to the Academy facilities that disturbs, annoys, or causes inconvenience to any other person. "Quiet hours" will be observed in the dormitory building between 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m.~~

~~(26) Students shall be courteous and respectful in all dealings with DPSST staff, instructors, fellow officers, the public, college officials and students.~~

~~(27) No student or resident shall represent themselves as an Oregon Public Safety student in order to gain special favors or consideration in the neighboring communities or at Western Oregon University (WOU).~~

~~(28) Students attending Academy classes shall, upon request, truthfully, completely, and impartially report, testify, and/or present information on all Academy related matters under inquiry by DPSST staff.~~

~~(29) (4) In addition to these rules, all persons attending classes at the Academy shall be held accountable to the provisions of the Criminal Justice Code of Ethics or equivalent discipline specific Code of Ethics and the Student Conduct Expectations.~~

## **259-012-0015**

### **Weapons**

~~(1) Immediately upon arrival at the Academy, all basic students will secure all weapons in their assigned gun lockers. This shall include firearms, ammunition and chemical agents such as oleocapsicum sprays. Possession of any weapon by a basic student in the dormitory building, classroom, a vehicle, or on the person is prohibited except when authorized for training purposes or by Academy training staff.~~

~~(2) Any person residing at the Academy and/or or attending specialized or advanced courses is also prohibited from possessing weapons, including firearms and chemical agents, in the dormitory sleeping areas except when authorized by Academy training staff.~~

## **259-012-0020**

### **Injury or Illness**

~~All injuries incurred at the Academy must be reported to an Academy staff member immediately. Any illness that may restrict the student's participation in training activities must also be reported.~~

## **259-012-0025**

### **Inspections**

~~Inspection of quarters will be made, as deemed necessary, by Academy staff. Personal belongings will only be inspected when the student is present.~~

## **259-012-0030**

### **Regulations**

~~The Department will compile regulations which in conjunction with these rules will describe training activities and student procedures for those persons attending classes at the Academy.~~

## **259-012-0035**

### **Penalties**

(1) A person attending any course as a student or other participant, or a person residing at the Academy for any purpose, is subject to the rules which have been promulgated by the Department. The rules will be posted in a prominent location at the Academy. All persons attending the Academy will be expected to be knowledgeable of and to conform their conduct to the standards set forth in the rules.

(2) Failure to comply with the rules may result in the person being dismissed from the Academy, suspended from participating in Academy activities, or any other disciplinary action deemed appropriate. A student dismissed from the Academy or suspended from Academy participation for conduct or behavior in violation of the rules may not be given training credit or credit for completion of the course in which that student was enrolled. Any decision to withhold credit will be subject to Department approval.

(3) Any alleged violation of these rules, wherein a formal written report is made, shall be communicated to the student's department administrator by the DPSST staff. All disciplinary actions shall be made in accordance with the Oregon Public Safety Academy Student ~~Conduct Guide~~ **Rules and Regulations**.

(4) Dismissal, suspension, or other disciplinary action may be ordered by the Director, or any DPSST staff delegated that authority.

(a) In addition to the procedures for due process outlined in the Student ~~Conduct Guide~~ **Rules and Regulations**, if a student is to be dismissed the student may request a meeting with the Director and present written evidence.

(A) If the Director, or designee, agrees with the dismissal, the student's agency may appeal within 30 days of the dismissal to the Board. The appeal must be in writing and state the agency's case against the dismissal.

(5) Any person subject to sanctions for violation of these rules can request a hearing in accordance with OAR 259-005-0015.

**ACTION ITEM 1:** Determine whether to recommend filing the proposed language amendments to OAR 259-012-0005 through 259-012-0035 with the Secretary of State as a proposed rule.

***Randy Jackson move to recommend filing the proposed language amendments with the Secretary of State as a proposed rule. Scott Russell seconded the motion. The motion carried in a unanimous vote.***

**ACTION ITEM 2:** Determine whether to recommend filing the proposed language for OAR 259-012-0005 through 259-012-0035 with the Secretary of State as a permanent rule if no comments are received.

***Randy Jackson move to recommend filing the proposed language with the Secretary of State as a permanent rule if no comments are received. Scott Russell seconded the motion. The motion carried in a unanimous vote.***

**ACTION ITEM 3:** Pursuant to HB 3238, determine whether there is a significant fiscal impact on small businesses.

***HB 3238: The Committee did not identify any significant fiscal impact on small businesses pertaining to HB 3238.***

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 10:40 a.m.

A strategic planning session followed the regular meeting.

#### Strengths

Consistency in minimum level of training

On the job training statewide

FTEP at agency improving

FTEP customized at local level

DPSST new facility and technology

Professionalism of 9-1-1

DPSST recognizes needs for professionalism and on-going updates

Concerned DPSST Committee & Board

DPSST progressive attitude

Continuous improvement in program

Recognize need to supplement staff with professionals in field

Public demands = increased level of expectation

### Opportunities

Public demands and expectation of good services  
CD-ROM based training to assist in maintaining certification (similar to WMD classes)  
Look at training as more than just seat time  
Attitude of legislature toward funding

### Threats

Public does not know much about what 9-1-1 is and how it works  
Public expectations different than reality  
Attitude of legislature toward funding  
Failure to training litigation cases  
Legislative actions  
Attacks on 9-1-1 Telephone Tax/funding  
Competition for resources  
Special interest groups  
Unions/labor organizations  
Different attitudes toward training and costs

### Weakness

Always playing catch-up with technology (fiscal & training)  
Complex challenge to find balance on universal vs. customized  
More ethics training  
More scenario-based training  
No annual refresher courses currently provided by DPSST  
Critical Incident Dispatch training  
No easy feedback loop for new ideas  
Intermediate & Advanced Certificate needs to be meaningful  
Do we have enough trainers (not coaches) at local 9-1-1 agencies?  
Training management assistance (quantity/quality)  
Are we doing a good analysis of the curriculum based on the 80-hour cap?  
80-hour course format creates limitations  
Off-site training opportunities (not the Basic Course)  
Pre-Requisite – Do some classes before Basic Course such as NIMS, WMD, Haz-Mat  
More outreach to communications center managers (i.e. DPSST 101)  
Reduce turnover in 9-1-1 profession

### **Strategic Planning Results - Telecommunications**

- 1) Assistance with annual training (explore on-line, study guides, etc.)
- 2) Review Intermediate & Advanced certificate
- 3) More ethics, customer service, interpersonal communications training
- 4) Improve and create a meaningful feedback loop
- 5) Comprehensive curriculum review – look beyond the 80-Hour cap
- 6) Training leadership in training program management
- 7) Raise public profile/perception of 9-1-1 (PSA, public education, etc.)

- 8) Competition for resources among DPSST family (Crim. Justice, Fire, 9-1-1, etc.)
- 9) Pre-requisites before attending the Academy
- 10) Reduce turnover of 9-1-1 employees - Create best practices for recruit, select, retain

**Exhibit “A”**

**NENA**

**Hearing Standards for Public Safety**

**Telecommunicators**

NENA Hearing Standards for Public Safety Telecommunicators

Document 54-002

June 10, 2006

Prepared by:

National Emergency Number Association (NENA) Accessibility Committee and Human Resources

Sub-Committee

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NENA Hearing Standards for Public Safety

Telecommunicators

NENA 54-002

June 10, 2006

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**NENA**

**Operational Standard/Model Recommendation**

**NOTICE**

This Operational Standard/Model Recommendation is published by the National Emergency

Number Association (NENA) as an information source for the voluntary use of communication

centers and is provided as an example only. It is not intended to be a complete operational directive.

NENA reserves the right to revise this for any reason including, but not limited to, conformity with criteria or standards promulgated by various regulatory agencies, utilization of advances in the state of operational techniques or services described herein.

It is possible that certain federal, state or local regulations may restrict or require modification of the recommendations contained in this document. Therefore, this document should not be the only source of information used. NENA members are advised to contact their legal counsel to ensure compatibility with local requirements.

By using this document, the user agrees that NENA will have no liability for any consequential, incidental, special, or punitive damages arising from use of the document.

NENA's Operations Committee has developed this document. Recommendations for change to this document may be submitted to:

National Emergency Number Association  
4350 North Fairfax Drive  
Suite 750  
Arlington, VA 22203-1695  
800-332-3911  
NENA Hearing Standards for Public Safety  
Telecommunicators  
NENA 54-002  
June 10, 2006

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Acknowledgments:

This document has been developed by the National Emergency Number Association (NENA)

Accessibility Committee and Human Resources Sub-Committee.

The following individuals are recognized for their contributions in development of this document.

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**1 Executive Overview**

This document is provided to assist public safety answering points (PSAPs) in establishing Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-compliant hearing standards for public safety

telecommunicators. It is a function of the public safety telecommunicator to receive and process audible information from various telecommunications devices. Therefore, the following standard has been created to assist managers in developing minimum hearing standards required to perform this basic and essential function of the public safety telecommunicator position.

This standard includes information including:

- Telecommunicator position requirements
- Audiometric testing of candidates and employees
- Audiology
- Americans with Disabilities Act as it relates to employment

## **2 Introduction**

### **2.1 Purpose and Scope**

This Hearing Standards for Public Safety Telecommunicators standards document is a tool for PSAP managers to use in the development of minimum hearing standards for public safety telecommunicators. It defines standard hearing requirements and audiology necessary to perform the basic functions of the telecommunicator position.

### **2.2 Reason to Implement**

This standard will be helpful to PSAP managers by providing reasonable and defensible industry accepted minimum hearing standards for public safety telecommunicators.

### **2.3 Benefits**

Use of this “Hearing Standards for Public Safety Telecommunicators” standards document provides PSAP centers with:

- A nationally accepted minimum hearing standard for the public safety telecommunicator position;
- Means by which to assess the hearing of potential candidates or current employees in the public safety telecommunicator position;
- Recommended audiometric testing policies.

### **2.4 Technical Impacts Summary**

Not applicable.

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### **2.5 Document Terminology**

The terms "shall ", "must" and "required" are used throughout this document to indicate required

parameters and to differentiate from those parameters that are recommendations.

Recommendations

are identified by the words "desirable" or "preferably".

### **2.6 Reason for Reissue**

NENA reserves the right to modify this document. Whenever it is reissued, the reason(s) will be

provided in this paragraph.

### **2.7 Costs Factors**

Cost factors affecting PSAPs will include the costs associated with audiometric testing and any

reasonable accommodations necessary for persons with hearing impairment.

### **2.8 Cost Recovery Considerations**

Local funding sources will generally be utilized for cost factors associated with audiometric testing

and/or reasonable accommodations. PSAPs may have access to local government occupational

health centers or be able to partner with neighboring PSAPs/agencies to help reduce costs associated

with audiometric testing.

### **2.9 Acronyms/Abbreviations**

The acronyms/abbreviations used in this document have not as yet been included in the master

glossary. After initial approval of this document, they will be included. Link to the master glossary

is located at:

[http://www.nena.org/media/files/NENA00-001April2006\\_1\\_1.pdf](http://www.nena.org/media/files/NENA00-001April2006_1_1.pdf) .

### **The following Acronyms are used in this document:**

dB Decibels

Hz Hertz

### **The following Definitions are used in this document:**

Decibel A unit for expressing the relative intensity of sounds on a scale from zero for the average least perceptible sound (near total silence) to about 130 for the

average pain level. A sound 10 times more powerful than 0dB is 10 dB. A

sound 100 times more powerful than near total silence is 20 dB. A sound 1,000

times more powerful than near total silence is 30 dB. In normal, non-laboratory situations an average human ear can only detect a changes of at least 3 dB.

Hertz Hertz (abbreviated Hz) is a unit of frequency (of change in state or cycle in a sound wave, alternating current, or other cyclical waveform) of one cycle per

second. It replaces the earlier term; cycle per second (cps). In acoustic sound,

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the range of average human hearing is from 20 Hz to roughly 20 kHz (20 thousand Hertz). The pitch of middle C on a piano is 263 Hz.

Otolaryngologist A physician specialized in diagnosing diseases of the head and neck especially those involving the ears, nose, and throat (ENT).

### **3 Hearing Standards for Public Safety Telecommunicators**

#### **3.1 Position Requirements**

The public safety telecommunicator position requires the acquisition of auditory information from citizens and other public safety entities requesting public safety services or assistance as well as to

provide telephone support. Examples of some of these activities are as follows:

- Receive and process, from multiple sources, information requiring public safety services

including other telecommunicators, field units or electronic devices.

- Transmit emergency and administrative messages over communications systems.

- Dispatch emergency services by radio and electronics and coordinate response activities.

- Receive and transmit orders and instructions.

- Monitor security, fire, medical and emergency management alarms and warning systems.

- Monitor multiple radio frequencies for coordination and information.

- Monitor teletype system.

#### **3.2 Medical Evaluation**

Medical evaluation shall only be conducted in order to determine a candidate or current employee's

fitness to perform essential job tasks and shall not be conducted in an attempt to identify disabilities

which do not affect job performance, regardless of need for reasonable accommodation.

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##### **3.2.1 Evaluator Credentials**

Any person conducting audiometric testing shall be a trained technician and/or licensed or certified

as an audiologist or medical doctor.

*Commentary:*

*Any hearing conservation programs or follow-up exams for hearing loss should be conducted by a*

*medical doctor (preferably an otolaryngologist) or a certified audiologist.*

##### **3.2.2 Candidates for Employment**

Audiometric testing shall be performed on each candidate in order to detect any physical or medical

condition that could adversely affect the candidate's ability to safely perform all essential job tasks.

This evaluation shall be conducted prior to the candidate entering a training program or participating in departmental activities. Any medical evaluation, including audiometric testing, required of candidates should be provided at no cost to the candidate.

### **3.2.3 Current Employees**

PSAPs shall develop policies and procedures for audiometric testing of employees in order to determine continued fitness to perform job tasks. These policies and procedures shall ensure that employees undergo audiometric testing, at least, on an as needed basis; when a potential hearing related problem is noted by the employer or employee. Any medical evaluation, including audiometric testing, required of employees shall be provided at no cost to the employee.

*Commentary:*

*Although not required, it is recommended that employees undergo annual audiometric testing to identify any deterioration in hearing ability as early as possible and determine continued fitness to perform job related tasks.*

### **3.2.4 Medical Records**

Many states have laws concerning the placement of medical evaluation records in an employee's personnel file. In the absence of such laws, PSAPs shall maintain any medical evaluation records in a file separate from the employee's personnel file. If annual audiometric tests are conducted, records shall be kept for the duration of employment.

*Commentary:*

*The separate medical records file may be a second file folder in the employee's personnel file, or housed separately in a completely different location than personnel records. PSAPs should ensure they are in compliance with any applicable state and local laws.*

### **3.3 Audiology**

Public safety telecommunicators must quickly and accurately receive and process auditory

information in an environment that includes various background noises such as telephones ringing,

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multiple frequency radio traffic, and general conversation. Generally, the noise level in PSAPs is

moderate, but requires that telecommunicators be able to differentiate various verbal and non-verbal auditory cues at variable intensities.

### **3.3.1 Sound**

Sound is composed of three variables: frequency, intensity, and duration. The frequency of sound

waves gives the sound pitch. Normal human conversation falls between 500 to 3000 Hertz (Hz).

Sound intensity is akin to loudness and is generally measured in decibels (dB). Human hearing

sensitivity generally ranges from -10 to 25 dB. Therefore, a person who cannot hear a sound until its

intensity is higher than 25 dB is considered to be experiencing hearing loss.

[http://www.atlasaviation.com/medical/hearing\\_and\\_noise\\_in\\_aviation.htm](http://www.atlasaviation.com/medical/hearing_and_noise_in_aviation.htm)

### **3.3.2 Hearing Thresholds**

Audiometric testing shall assess hearing thresholds in each ear at each of the following frequencies:

- 300 Hz
- 500 Hz
- 1000 Hz
- 2000 Hz
- 3000 Hz
- 4000 Hz
- 6000 Hz
- 8000 Hz

[http://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show\\_document?p\\_table=STANDARDS&p\\_id=9735](http://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_table=STANDARDS&p_id=9735)

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### **3.3.3 Audiometric Speech Discrimination**

In order to perform the essential job tasks of the public safety telecommunicator, a person must be

able to hear and differentiate speech at various intensity levels. Therefore, public safety telecommunicators shall have no uncorrected hearing loss, in either ear, greater than those depicted

below:

500 Hz 1000 Hz 2000 Hz 3000 Hz

Better Ear 35 dB 30 dB 30 dB 40 dB

Worst Ear 35 dB 50 dB 50 dB 60 dB

<http://www.leftseat.com/FAAforms.htm>

### **3.3.4 Hearing Conservation**

Once a public safety telecommunicator is determined to have some hearing loss there are steps that

can be taken to slow and/or help protect against further hearing loss. PSAPs should obtain specific advice on hearing conservation from trained professionals (i.e. Medical Doctor). Assistance may be available from local physicians, employee assistance programs, and the Occupational Health and Safety Administration. General suggestions include:

- Avoid, as much as possible, exposure to noise levels higher than 90 dB at any frequency, especially any exposure that occurs daily.
- Utilization of noise reduction headsets.
- Noise canceling engineering including consoles and wall and floor coverings.

*Commentary:*

*Individual or issue specific measures should be sought in consultation with affected persons and a trained professional (i.e. audiologist, Medical Doctor). The Occupational Safety and Health*

*Administration can also be of assistance.*

<http://www.osha.gov/dts/osta/otm/noise/hcp/index.html>

### **3.4 Americans with Disability Act (ADA): Employment**

The ADA prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in employment. It prohibits discrimination in recruiting, hiring, promotions, training, pay, social activities, and other privileges of employment.

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#### **3.4.1 Reasonable Accommodations**

Public entities are required to make reasonable modifications to policies, practices, procedures, and equipment where necessary to avoid discrimination, unless they can demonstrate that doing so

would fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program, or activity being provided.

Examples

of reasonable accommodation include:

- Headsets with built in amplification.
- Hearing aids.

*Commentary:*

*Individual or issue specific measures of accommodation should be sought in consultation with*

*affected persons and a trained professional (i.e. audiologist, Medical Doctor).*

#### **3.4.2 Job Task Necessity**

It is essential to the life and safety of the community and Public Safety Responders for Public Safety

Telecommunicators to meet the hearing standards set forth in this document.

#### **4 References**

FAA Medical Standards, Protocols and Forms

New Mexico Statutory Authority (NMSA 1978, Section 29-7C-3)

NFPA Hearing Standards for Firefighters (1582-8; Chapter 3)

Occupational Safety and Health administration (OSHA 3074)

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Decibel>

[http://www.kemt.fei.tuke.sk/Predmety/KEMT320\\_EA/\\_web/Online\\_Course\\_on\\_Acoustics/hearing.html](http://www.kemt.fei.tuke.sk/Predmety/KEMT320_EA/_web/Online_Course_on_Acoustics/hearing.html)

html

<http://www.audioholics.com/techtips/roomacoustics/physicsofhearing.php>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sound>

#### **5 Exhibits**

None.