

RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY



RI E-911 UNIFORM EMERGENCY TELEPHONE SYSTEM DIVISION **2020 ANNUAL REPORT**



Daniel J. McKee, Governor

*Colonel James M. Manni
Director, Department of Public Safety
Superintendent, Rhode Island State Police*

*J. David Smith
Director, Rhode Island E-911*

311 Danielson Pike
North Scituate, RI 02857
Telephone: (401) 459-0911
Fax: (401) 459-0933
Website: RI911.RI.GOV

Director's Message

The global pandemic of 2020 was the foremost issue for this agency and the larger community that we serve. The resolve of every member of this agency to stay strong and report to work each day during a potentially deadly health risk is commendable if not heroic. As our State's first, first responders we processed 463,800 calls under these conditions.

The protection of our Rhode Island E-911 members against the pandemic health risk had to be a priority. While there are plans for Continuity of Operation (COOP) in place, I honor the administrative staff and supervisors who recognized the challenges and designed creative solutions to protect everyone during this unprecedented pandemic event.

In March of 2020, Colonel James M. Manni, Superintendent of the Rhode Island State Police and Director of Public Safety (DPS), suggested that RI E-911 activate our secondary Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) as a protective measure.

While some agency members contracted the virus from outside sources anyway, the strategy worked. Aside from the required quarantine and isolation cases, the workforce remained operational. Sadly, we know that Dispatchers and Telecommunicators (TCs) across the country lost their lives from the virus. The proactive measures taken in Rhode Island likely saved lives.

We must also recognize the immediate families of our staff who accepted and supported the responsibility that we all share to provide essential services regardless of personal consequences.

Workflow calls in queue (referred to automated message), opioid calls, domestic violence calls and many other statistics are evaluated to understand trends and support partner agencies. Strategically, we see the RI E-911 Uniform Emergency Telephone System Division as a service (911aaS), we know that tactically it is people helping people at the time of their greatest need.

A priority for 2020 and what must become a lifetime commitment of RI E-911, is training, education, and support through peer counseling. The pandemic afforded us the opportunity of virtual meetings and remote learning. Although there may have been some efficiencies and savings with this format, everyone agrees that it was no substitute for on-premises instruction.

The bottom-up assessment of policy, procedures, and review of technical network design conducted last year was successful. During 2020, we completed a comprehensive overhaul of all IT systems, including, but not limited to, firewalls, data center virtual technology, and core switching services. While costly, this was a major commitment to the security and scalable future of our agency's technical requirements.

Agency members have earned FEMA certifications in IS100 and IS200 so that we may become eligible for certain federal grants and partnerships. RI E-911 has become a member of the National Emergency Number Association (NENA) providing access to a multitude of resource material compiled by industry experts. Our Supervisors have been provided with management and leadership training along with additional educational opportunities.

There is mutual interest that exists between our agency and other professional organizations such as the Rhode Island Association of Fire Chiefs, the Rhode Island Police Chiefs Association, the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns, the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency along with many other fine state agencies and organizations. We are proud to recognize the motto of our host agency "In the Service of The State" but we also know that our technology makes 911 service unique. We want to be known as not just the ubiquitous and unknown space that you call for help when you dial 9-1-1. We want to educate everyone about the various services and products that can be developed through shared resources, technical solutions, data mining, advanced predictive analytics and as-yet developed technology.

Thank you to the citizens and visitors to our great state for all the confidence you have in our staff to assist you at your most crucial moments in life. My most profound thanks to members of this agency who take those calls and find you the best help.

INTRODUCTION

The idea of a national emergency telephone number is not a new one. England has been using 999 nationwide since 1937. Other European countries have been using universal emergency numbers as well, including Belgium (900), Denmark (000), and Sweden (9000).

In this country, the need for such a number was first discussed in 1958 by the International Association of Fire Chiefs who recommended that a single, nationwide fire reporting telephone number be adopted. By 1967, the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice and the President's Commission on Civil Disorders were expressing interest in a national telephone number for reporting all types of fire, medical and law enforcement emergencies.

In 1973, the three-digit number "9-1-1" was established as our national emergency telephone number. Implementation of this service was, however, left to state and local governments. By 1977, several states had passed legislation mandating implementation of 9-1-1 statewide, and several major cities had established 9-1-1 program as well. Today, 9-1-1 is the primary emergency number serving most of the population of the United States.

Planning for Rhode Island's Enhanced 9-1-1 system began in 1978 with the appointment of a 15-member legislative commission to study the feasibility of adopting a uniform emergency telephone system (9-1-1) statewide. In 1984, the commission submitted its final report after 27 meetings, five public hearings and extensive study of the subject. The commission recommended the implementation of an enhanced 9-1-1 uniform emergency telephone system with one statewide public safety answering point (PSAP).

In 1984, based upon the recommendations of the commission, the General Assembly established the Enhanced 9-1-1 Uniform Emergency Telephone System Authority. The Rhode Island Enhanced 9-1-1 Uniform Emergency Telephone System went online November 21, 1988.

In 1989, the corporate existence of the 9-1-1 Authority was terminated, and the Division was transferred to the Executive Department of state government. In 1996, the 9-1-1 Division was transferred from the Executive Department to the Department of Administration. In July 2008, the 9-1-1 Division was transferred from the Department of Administration to the Department of Public Safety and is now hereby known as the RI E-911 Uniform Emergency Telephone System Division (E911, E 9-1-1 or E-911).

GOVERNANCE AND OVERSIGHT

In 2008 the Rhode Island General Assembly passed Article 9 of House Bill 7390 to reorganize many functions of state government. The major focus of this reorganization was to bring several law enforcement and criminal justice agencies previously under the Department of Administration under one organizational structure. This re-structuring created the Department of Public Safety.

The goal of the consolidation of these agencies is to assure the provision of professional services, enable the most efficient and effective use of the state's public safety resources, allow for the consolidation of the communications, training, and operating procedures of these agencies, and protect the lives and promote the safety of the citizens of the state.

The legislation named the Superintendent of the Rhode Island State Police as the Director of the Department of Public Safety. Accordingly, all directors of these agencies report to the Director. The Director is appointed by, reports directly to, and serves at the pleasure of the Governor.

A statutory Advisory Commission acts in an advisory capacity to the Director. Its composition and function are described in Section 39-21-4, General Laws, State of Rhode Island:

- **39-21-4 Advisory Commission.** – (a) There shall be an E 9-1-1 Uniform Emergency Telephone System Advisory Commission consisting of fourteen (14) members to be appointed in the following manner: five (5) of the members shall be: the Director of the Department of Health or his or her designee, the Fire Marshal or his or her designee, the Colonel of the Rhode Island State Police or his or her designee, the State Telecommunications Director or his or her designee, and the Administrator of the Division of Public Utilities and Carriers or his or her designee; three (3) members shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House: one of whom shall be a member of the House of Representatives, and one of whom shall be a representative of the Police Chiefs' Association, and one of whom shall be a representative of the telecommunication services provider that is the primary provider to the E 9-1-1 PSAP; three (3) members shall be appointed by the President of the Senate; one of whom shall be a member of the Senate, one of whom shall be a representative of the Fire Chiefs' Association, one of whom shall be a representative of the wireless telecommunication industry; and three (3) members shall be appointed by the governor: two (2) of whom shall be representatives of the public, one of whom shall be representative of the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns.
 - (b) Members of the Commission shall serve five (5) year terms, except for ex officio members.
 - (c) The Advisory Commission may make such recommendations and give such advice to the Director of the division as it deems appropriate.

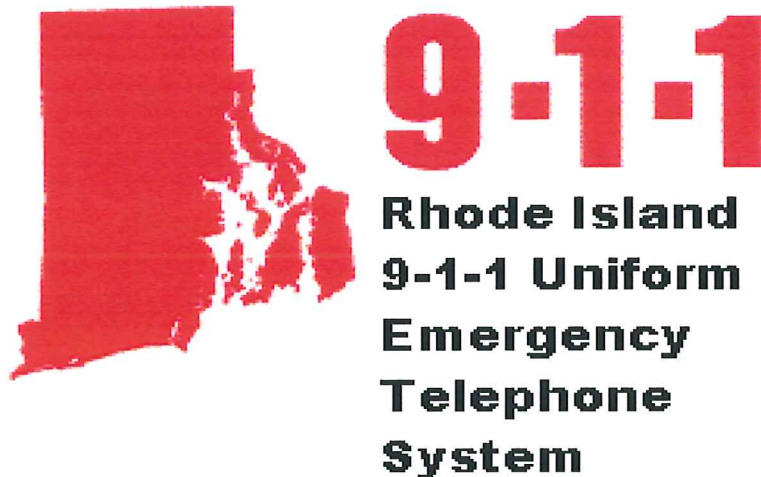
ADVISORY COMMISSION MEETINGS WERE SUSPENDED DUE TO THE PANDEMIC

ORGANIZATION

RI E-911 Uniform Emergency Telephone Agency like many agencies is comprised of Administration and Operations staff.

The Administrative staff consists of the Director, Principal Project Manager, Contracts and Specifications Officer, Project Managers, Administrative Support Specialist and Database Coordinator. The Administrative staff leads and supports the agency and all executive functions.

The Operations staff consist of Supervisors and Telecommunicators whose primary objective is to provide a simple and expeditious way for Rhode Island residents and visitors to request assistance in an emergency by dialing "9-1-1" on traditional landline telephones and on wireless cellular telephones. Those requests are received in a central statewide communications center and are transferred to the appropriate local public safety and emergency medical response units for rapid response.

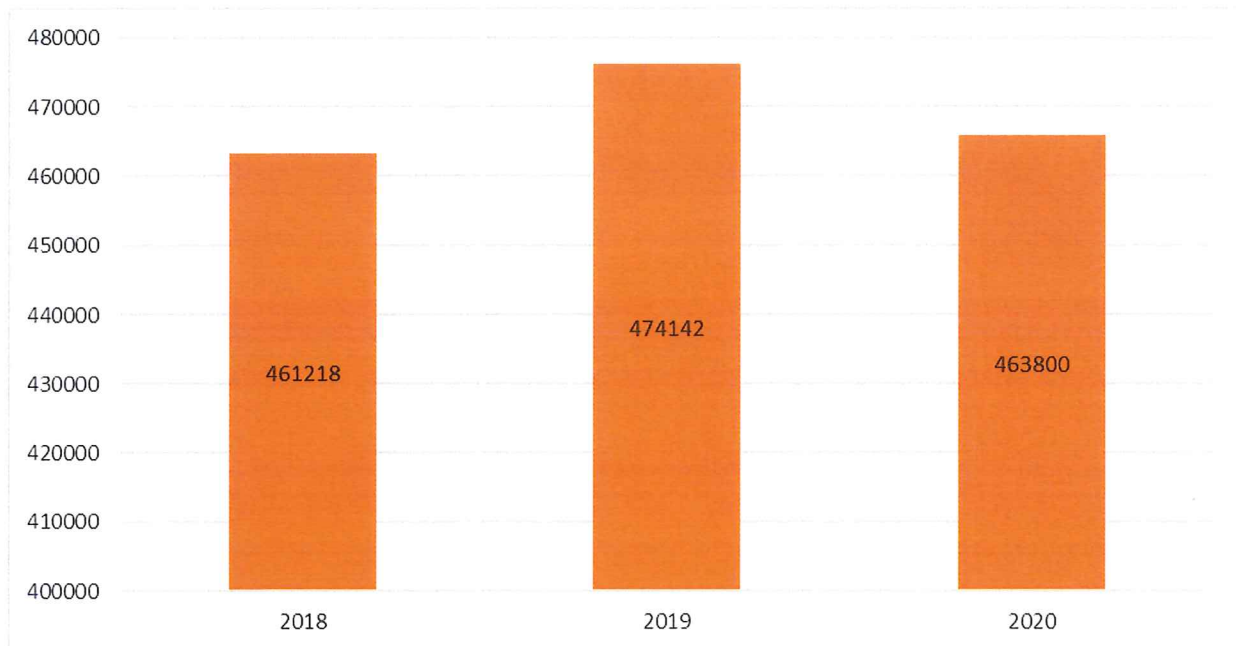


2020 OPERATIONAL STATISTICS

Call volume reports are generated weekly, quarterly, semi-annually and annually through the combined efforts and data processing skills of our 911 staff, supervisors and technology vendors.

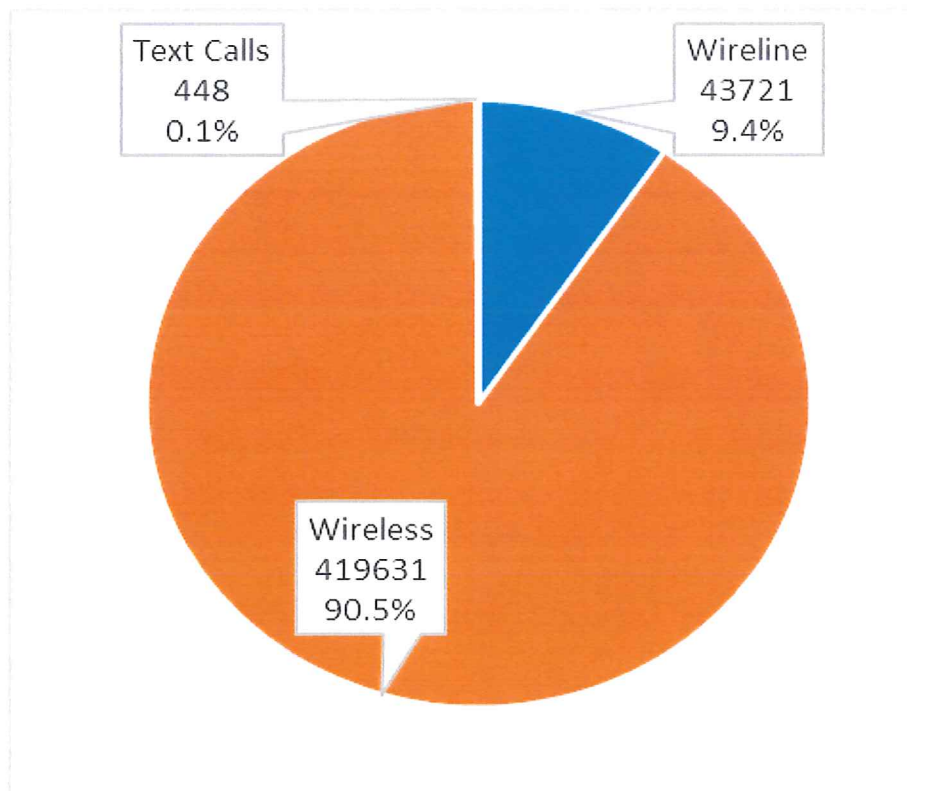
In 2020, RI E-911 received a total of 463,800 incoming calls resulting in 317,479 transferred requests for emergency services. Wireless calls comprised 90% of total call volume. This information along with transfer data can be found on the next two pages of this report.

CALL VOLUME REPORT



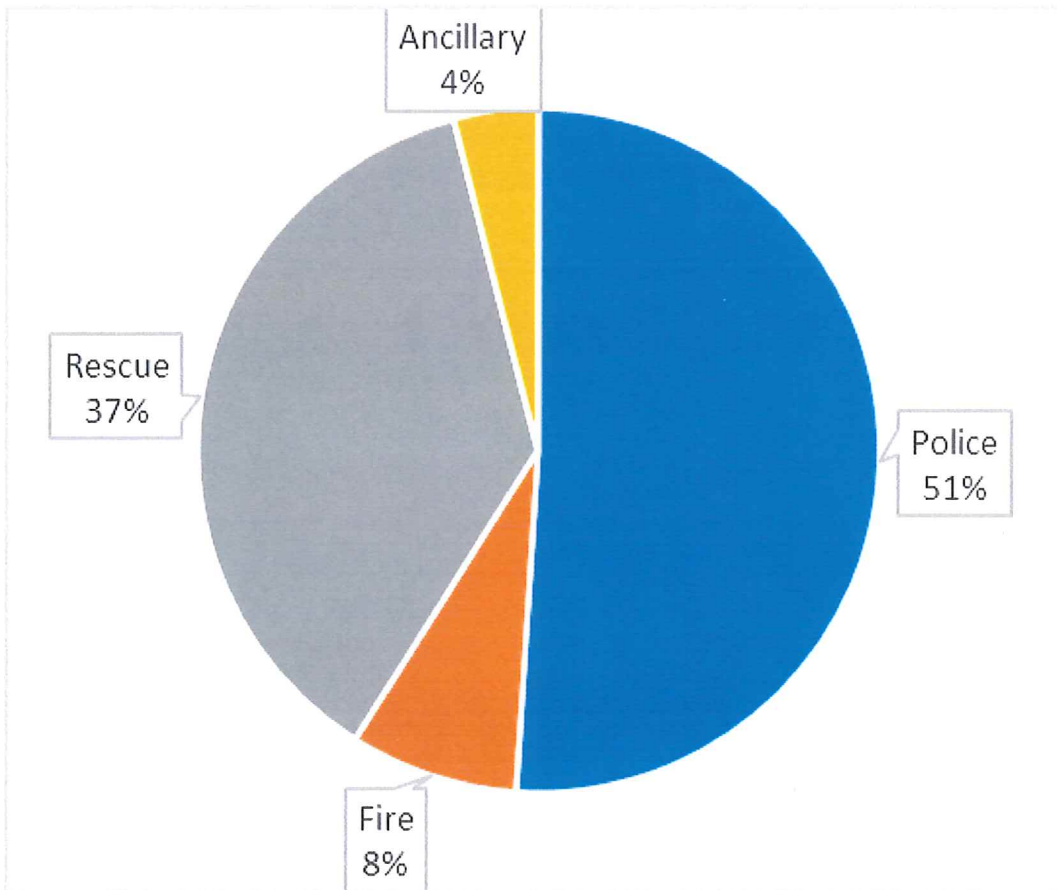
Incoming 911 Calls

<u>Description</u>	<u>Total Calls</u>	<u>Percentage of Calls</u>
Wireline	43,721	9.4%
Wireless	419,631	90.5%
Text Calls	448	0.1%
Total Incoming Calls	463,800	100%



Transferred Calls

<u>Description</u>	<u>Total Calls</u>
Police	51%
Fire	8%
Rescue	37%
Ancillary Calls	4%
<hr/>	
Total	100%
Total Transfers	317,479



2020 OVERVIEW

TRAINING

RI E-911 conducts a very comprehensive training program for new hires. Prior to the interview process candidates are invited to a formal orientation. During orientation the candidates are apprised of the specific job requirements, more specifically, what is required as an “Essential” employee. Additionally, after candidates are selected, he/she is required to pass (a) a criminal background check, (b) a physical examination, (c) a psychological evaluation and, (d) American Heart Association First Aid and CPR certifications.

New employees are enrolled in a four-month training program which includes, but is not limited to, reviewing policies and procedures, listening to 911 calls for review and comment, familiarizing themselves with the software programs, taking live 911 calls in a controlled environment, listening to guest speakers from various state agencies and other disciplines whose clients traditionally dial 9-1-1 for help.

RI E-911 now requires employees to become certified in FEMA ICS 100 and 200 which are necessary to be compliant with Federal Grant guidelines. RI E-911 plans to offer more continuing education classes, such as, stress management, autism awareness, HAM radio, management for supervisors, etc. We are also discussing the necessary steps to become an accredited agency.



PANDEMIC RESPONSE

RI E-911 was tasked with running a critical 24x7x365 operation during the COVID-19 Coronavirus Pandemic. Rhode Island noted an apparent correlation between the announcement of shelter-in-place orders and a reported temporary spike in call volume relative to callers describing symptoms of COVID-19, opioid and domestic violence calls. These call categories were tracked and forwarded to the Department of Health and the Department of Public Safety accordingly.

COVID-19 has affected the anxiety and stress levels of our Operations Staff, and we have been proactive relative to offering support services to support wellness and mental health during the pandemic. RI E-911 has taken specific wellness measures to combat these concerns, including but not limited to:

- Promoting Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs)
- Arranged for stress management presentations.
- Updates from the RI Department of Health
- Disseminating wellness webinars and articles
- Arranging visits from service animals

RI E-911 had to implement measures to ensure PSAP health and minimize the possibility of crippling the operation due to widespread infections and quarantining protocols. The following measures were implemented:

- Activation of our Alternate PSAP
- Health screenings
- Changes to minimum staffing requirement
- Ample supplies of PPE were provided.
- New policies/procedures relative to PSAP cleanliness and social distancing measures
- Ordering technical and administrative staff to work from home.
- Taking employees temperatures at the start of shifts
- Installing UV disinfectant lights inside HVAC systems
- Prohibiting non-PSAP personnel from the floor