



So . . . Now that you've read what is expected during the hiring process, you still want to be an Emergency Services Communicator, "Dispatcher and Call Taker"?

"WHAT TO EXPECT"

TRAINING PROCESS:

Once you are hired as a Communications Operator with the Thunder Bay Police Service, you will begin training in a classroom environment. Each day of classroom training, Monday to Friday for two weeks, you will attend structured classes, which are facilitated by a current Communications Supervisor. You can expect intensive training in the operation of our CAD (Computer Operated Dispatch) system, geography, jurisdictional boundaries and common locations. Policy and procedure is covered, along with departmental standards of operation. We will also cover our radio systems, police jargon, the Positron phone system and critical incident management among many other topics.

You will have several tests on material you've covered, as well as the opportunity to practice hands-on application of what you've learned. You will listen to speakers sharing their expertise in areas such as: court room protocol, giving evidence in court, Crime Stoppers process, suicide intervention, pursuit protocol, diversity, domestic violence, sexual assaults, work ethics and let's not forget about stress management which you will certainly need; that's called taking care of yourself.

Everyone has their favorite subjects, and learning while competing with your classmates makes for a fast-paced, fun and bonding experience. You need to be able to enjoy a laugh at yourself and each other while you learn, as this helps make the classroom time memorable, as well as educational. The people you train in the class-room with sometimes end up being your closest on-the-job friends; these people will continue their careers alongside you. Even though we encourage having some fun, remember that this is a very demanding career and what you learn in the classroom will help build a foundation for what is next to come.

After graduating from the classroom phase, you will be assigned to work with a designated trainer for your on-the-job training. This will last for 3 months or more. You will work the normal shift schedule, days, afternoons and nights, 6 on and 3 off. You will work statutory holidays and will work when your family is enjoying time together. Your time on the floor is the most important part of training. Each day presents new and exciting challenges. It is not unthinkable to go from a very slow point during the shift, to full speed within a few seconds!

There are three stages in this training: call take, where you actively take both non-emergency and emergency calls; main police dispatch, where you relay information from the call taker and document specifics pertaining to each call – you can be responsible for as many as 30 units at any given time; last but certainly not least, there is our secondary CPIC radio dispatch position, which involves completing computer queries to assist our patrol officers as well as dispatching and relaying information over the radio. Initially, this all can feel intimidating. Your anxiety levels will sky rocket at times. You will second guess yourself and wonder if you will ever make it through the training. Everyone is nervous when they first start taking calls and dispatching. All of our operators have been through training; we understand and will support you.

During this portion of training, you will learn to put into practice all the things you were taught in the classroom. The realization of how much the citizens and the officers of this city depend on us makes this phase of training so incredibly worth-while. The best part of on-the-job training is having a trainer at your side in case there's a problem.

Your callers may be injured, angry, frightened, panicked, enraged, confused and/or may be under the influence. Yours is the calm voice in the storm they turn to in their hour of need. The officers on the road can be responding from call to call and will expect you to be on top of your game at all times and they can be abrupt with their expectations. Again, remaining calm and being in control will give them the confidence in your ability. You'll employ all your training toward this goal; utilizing a wide set of skills that is unique to this profession.

During this stage, your trainers will answer your questions, monitor your progress, and point out potential weaknesses and strengths and guide you until they determine that you are ready to take calls and dispatch on your own.

