



***So . . . You still want to be an Emergency Services Communicator,
“Dispatcher and Call Taker”?***

“WHAT TO EXPECT”

YOU’VE MADE IT!:

The day comes when each new communicator is released from their training and assumes a position on their own. Each decision you make directly affects the response from the police service to the citizens. Each call-for-service that appears on our computer screen is a citizen in need of some action from the police. Sometimes, the action needed is on a life or death basis, sometimes it’s not. However, every time we are asked by the public to respond, *that* response starts with the call takers and dispatchers.

You may have doubts at first about being ready to work independently, as it can take as much as a full year or more until one actually feels comfortable about being on your own. Your familiarity with call-types, resources, and speed will all continue to improve. This work keeps you mentally sharp and you will continue to develop throughout your entire career, both in job skills and as a compassionate human being.

You will continue to work eight hour shifts for six consecutive days rotating through days, afternoons and night shifts. As a 24-hour, 7 day a week operation, you must be mentally prepared to work these shifts and hours. You are expected to work weekends and holidays, with your days off fluctuating from weekends and during the week-days. Your vacation times are chosen many months in advance.

When there are staffing shortages or unusual circumstances, such as a critical incident, or city emergency, you may be required to come to work early or stay late. Along with our police officers and fire-fighters, you are considered to be "essential personnel". This means that you are needed at work despite inclement weather, such as a blizzard.

While we enjoy humor and camaraderie, we take our work seriously. We take pride in helping our citizen callers and our field officers through some of the worst experiences of their lives. Confidentiality is required and many aspects of your work cannot be discussed with anyone. We strive to treat all callers and our field officers with our full attention, courtesy and professionalism. This code of behavior is also the standard by which we treat one another within our Centre.

When a serious incident sadly occurs in our community, a beautiful thing happens in our Communications Centre. Everyone, all communicators and supervisors, work quietly and quickly together until the situation at our end is basically resolved. It's like choreography, or a hive where all the bees work in concert. The teamwork here is phenomenal, and essential.

You will be joining a very select group of highly skilled “multi-taskers”. Although the support of your family for your career is necessary, no one will fully understand the types of calls you are fielding more than another communicator does. You can expect to receive support and encouragement from all your trainers and co-workers, and you will forge friendships throughout your Thunder Bay Police Service career. We enjoy a great teamwork at our Communications Center. Everyone tries to help one another whenever and however needed. After all, we are all attracted to this work because we like to help people!

