

# **Job Description - Public Safety Communications Watch Commander (PSCWC)**

## **Pike County Communications District**

### **General Summary**

This critical role serves as a supervisor of the Emergency Communications Center (ECC) which is the vital communications link between the public needing help and emergency services response. PSCWCs supervise Public Safety Communications Technicians which are typically the first point of contact when a person reaches out for help. PSCWCs are often the highest ranking official in the ECC. This requires a candidate to be able to work independently in a high stress environment while being responsible for and assistance with the work of the PSCTs receiving and evaluating incoming requests for emergency services including but not limited to law enforcement, fire, emergency medical services (EMS), emergency management, public works, and utilities, triaging those requests for service, providing guidance and assistance to the public in life-safety situations and coordinating appropriate responses to high-risk, high-stress operations, with the objective of keeping all participants safe.

### **Supervision Received:**

This position reports to the Deputy Director.

### **Supervision of:**

This position is directly responsible for a watch of 2-5 technicians.

### **Essential Duties and Responsibilities**

The primary responsibility of the PSCWC is to supervise the receipt, investigation, verification, collection, and distribution of information to protect the life, liberty, and property of the citizens, visitors, and emergency responders of Pike County and the State of Alabama. This responsibility includes:

- Directing the public safety response to requests for emergency services within the district boundaries.
- Oversee the work of assigned employees and ensure their compliance with district policies and procedures.
- Conduct daily quality assurance / quality improvement review of employee work products.
- Coordinate scheduling of assigned watches for communications staff.
- Conduct employee performance evaluations.
- Work with the Deputy Director and Training Coordinator to ensure assigned employees meet training goals.
- Participate in disciplinary decisions and actions.
- Prepare reports and correspondence related to operational problems or personnel matters.
- Monitor applicable public safety equipment to ensure functionality.
- Receiving requests for emergency services answering them professionally and accurately categorizing the requests.

- Recognizing if a call is received from telephone, text, video, or an automated data feed.
- Using appropriate technology to communicate with callers.
- Interpreting sensor data to triage, prioritize, properly categorize, and initiate the correct emergency response.
- Using knowledge of law enforcement, fire, and EMS protocols to prioritize and sequence calls promptly in limited time with limited or no supervision.
- Demonstrating clear and effective communications with active listening, call control, judgment, respect, and empathy with callers that range from calm to panicked.
- Providing pre-arrival and post-dispatch instructions to the public, when appropriate, during high stress situations, such as cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), childbirth, hemorrhaging, active shooter, and entrapments.
- Managing challenging callers using appropriate handling of distressed, autistic, hearing-impaired, elderly, angry, and foreign-language-speaking callers.
- Providing direct counseling to suicidal persons, domestic violence victims, and children.
- Ascertaining incident information by obtaining and verifying caller information and location, determining the nature of the incident, and all available data including but not limited to automated data, social media information, text message, images or video, and providing information to emergency services either verbally and/or digitally.
- Ability to prioritize multiple events based on available resources—critical thinking.
- Using TTY (TeleTYpe), TDD (Telecommunications Device for the Deaf), and relay services to comply with standards for handling calls from hearing-impaired callers.
- Utilizing language interpretation services and coordinating with mental health resources for appropriate contacts with callers who have mental health or language barriers to receiving help.
- Using text-to-911 to communicate effectively with callers.
- Interpreting caller location by using geographic knowledge, tools, and location tracking capabilities when available.
- Interpreting automatic number and automatic location data provided by the emergency communications phone system and verifying data using mapping software for accuracy and reliability.
- Maintaining communications during life-threatening emergencies, providing safety/lifesaving instructions, and maintaining control of the conversation until field units arrive on scene.
- Using available vehicular, bystander, and/or law enforcement information for the purpose of protecting the public at the scene as well as on-scene responders by identifying the need for advanced life support resources or specialized fire extraction equipment.
- Utilizing training and reference resources when determining the nature and priority of emergency incidents that have live-streaming videos, graphic images, and text.
- Using training and operational protocols to take appropriate action such as: relaying critical information, dispatching/initiating emergency response services, or referring callers to other agencies.
- Documenting incident details quickly and accurately to establish incident urgency, categorizing the incident type, and obtaining the proper help for the caller.

- Demonstrating clear and effective communications and active listening with public safety responders using appropriate terminology, codes, and signals.
- Relaying initial information for dispatch accurately, reviewing the call for service details, and assuming incident command until first responders arrive.
- Conducting health and safety status checks of responders and using other available technology to ensure on-scene responders' safety.
- Documenting thoroughly and accurately all incident activities while maintaining awareness of scene activities.
- Operating emergency, administrative, and backup telephone communications systems effectively.
- Facilitating the transferring of calls to the appropriate resources and performing conference calls with entities, such as but not limited to poison control centers or helicopter dispatch.
- Interpreting and understanding local and regional geography to quickly and accurately identify the location of the emergency to improve response times of field responders.
- Operating a sophisticated workstation comprised of multiple computer systems, computer-aided dispatch (CAD) software and geographical information systems (GIS), state and federal clearinghouses, call handling including teletypewriter (TTY) and text-to-911 sessions, as well as communications systems such as radio dispatch consoles and recording systems.
- Operating multiple systems while maintaining multiple conversations simultaneously without mistake.
- Notifying key personnel of critical incidents, using judgment to determine the need to contact other law enforcement and public safety agencies for additional information and resources as needed, or relaying information regarding incidents and situational awareness.
- Using mass notification software, including social media platforms, to keep the public informed of emergency incidents.
- Activating mass community warning and notification software programs to inform the public of impending critical information related to such things as severe weather impacts, potential injury or lifesafety events.
- Managing chain of custody for records and documentation used in court proceedings and legal discovery.
- Maintaining a calm demeanor under chaotic and stressful circumstances, multiple conversations, and frequently noisy environments.
- Completing training, certifications, and competencies as needed by actively seeking training, completing the training and certifications required for assigned positions, and completing continuing education and career development as necessary.
- Following established agency policies and procedures, being aware of liability to the agency, and adhering to federal disclosure and privacy laws.
- Using debriefing tools, stress management techniques, and critical incident response models to deal with mental or emotional strain or tension resulting from adverse or very demanding circumstances.

- Retrieve and relay information contained in the Alabama Criminal Justice Information Center (ACJIC) and the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) systems.
- Monitor, receive, and relay information using multiple radio channels or talkgroups.
- Provide routine non-technical information upon request and refer all other inquiries to the proper authority.
- Monitor applicable public safety equipment to ensure functionality.

### **Minimum Requirements**

- High school diploma or GED.
- Possess a valid Alabama Driver's License.
- Proficiently read and speak the English language.
- Must pass a background investigation that meets all local, state, and federal requirements as well as be without felony convictions.
- Must have never been convicted, or pled nolo contendere to a felony, serious misdemeanor, crime of moral turpitude, or any crime of violence.
- Must be able to pass a drug test.
- Must be able to pass a hearing test.
- Must have 2 or more years of direct public safety communications experience.

An applicant must be able to meet the following requirements:

- Dependable, self-motivated, and team-oriented, with a desire to provide a service to the community.
- Working knowledge of Windows-based software and various other computerized electronic, telecommunications equipment.
- Flexibility to adapt to changes.
- Has great attention to detail and empathy towards the customers' needs and concerns.
- Must be able to adapt and function, without reservation, in high-stress situations.
- Must be able to perform essential job functions with or without accommodation.
- Must be able to work on a rotating schedule including days, nights, weekends, and holidays to ensure 24/7 coverage.
- Subject to call back and hold over to maintain minimum staffing 24/7.
- This position is designated as essential and must report to work during times when the government/agency is closed.
- This position will be required to perform regular "ride-alongs" with law enforcement, fire, and EMS personnel.
- This position will be required to travel occasionally for training including overnight for up to 5 days at a time.

Must be able to obtain and maintain the following licenses and certifications within 6 months:

- Alabama Criminal Justice Information Center(ACJIC) Security Training.
- Certification in CPR
- Basic Telecommunications Course that includes:
  - Telecommunicator roles and responsibilities
  - 911 call processing

- Radio Communications
- Emergency Management
- Emergency communications technology
- Legal concepts
- Interpersonal communications
- Stress management
- Quality assurance
- FEMA IS-5 An Introduction to Hazardous Materials
- FEMA IS-100 Introduction to the Incident Command System
- FEMA IS-120 An Introduction to Exercises
- FEMA IS-144 TERT Basic Course
- FEMA IS-200 Basic Incident Command System of Initial Response
- FEMA IS-300 Intermediate ICS for Expanding Incidents
- FEMA IS-400 Advanced ICS
- FEMA IS-700 NIMS, an Introduction
- FEMA IS-800 National Response Framework (NRF), an Introduction
- FEMA E/L 969 All-Hazards Position Specific Communications Unit Leader
- FEMA IS-951 DHS Radio Interoperability
- FEMA IS-1300 Introduction to Continuity of Operations
- FEMA IS-2200 Basic Emergency Operations Center Functions

**Physical Requirements:**

This work is generally performed sitting or standing at a stationary desk with periods of frequent and rapid movement of the body, head and neck, arms, and legs separately and independently. Work regularly requires speaking or hearing and frequently sitting, using hands to finger, handle, or feel, reaching with hands and arms, using legs and feet to operate one or more foot pedals, and repetitive motions. Work requires close vision, distance vision, ability to adjust focus, depth perception, and peripheral vision. Vocal communication is required for expressing or exchanging ideas by means of the spoken word and conveying detailed or important instructions to others accurately, loudly or quickly. Hearing is required to perceive information at normal spoken word levels and to receive detailed information through oral communications and/or to make fine distinctions in sound. Work requires preparing and analyzing written or computer data. Work requires exposure to loud noises, extreme emotion, and stressful environments. Work is generally indoors and in a moderately noisy location surrounded by others talking on the phone or radio.

Work environment:

May be required to reach with hands and arms

May be required to lift/move up to 50 pounds

Required to sit or stand for extended periods

Required to operate office equipment requiring repetitive hand movement and fine coordination including use of computer keyboard and mouse.

Must be able to work all shifts, weekends, and holidays for this twenty-four (24) hour operation and work mandatory overtime.

**Work Environment:**

Work is performed in an emergency communications center. The work level can fluctuate from minimal to fast-paced and high volume. The employee deals with crisis situations that require them to quickly make major decisions involving people, resources, and property with frequently limited direction.

The PSCWC will have direct daily exposure to emergency situations, which will include illness, injury, violence, grief, and other forms of direct and vicarious trauma. There is no control over work pace, volume of calls, or nature of calls. The position encounters competing, urgent priorities, certainty of unpleasant incidents, and high potential of residual trauma. There is a probability that, at some point, the telecommunicator will handle a call involving persons known to them personally.

The PSCWC may be asked to work scheduled shifts at any time of the day or night, on weekends, and on holidays. Must be able to cope with, in a safe manner, stressful situations, emotional callers, irate responders, unprofessional contacts, and intentional verbal abuse and threats. Occasionally, the PSCWC may be required to perform duties at or near the scene of any emergency.

The PSCWC may be required to work in environments of extreme danger and under threat of harm from outside circumstances.

**Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities**

- Ability to set goals and objectives for self and others, give direction, and follow through with ensuring tasks are completed.
- Extremely adaptable to overcome rapidly changing circumstances that may prevent normal operations.
- Ability to resolve interpersonal conflict amongst employees.
- Advanced decision making skills and cost-benefit analysis.
- Advanced knowledge of emergency dispatch operations and organization.
- Ability to detect errors, determine causes, and apply corrections as appropriate.
- Ability to comprehend managerial policies and prioritize the needs of the District.
- By the end of the probationary period, thorough knowledge of the policies, procedures, processes, laws, ordinances, and regulations affecting public safety call taking, and the ability to apply them appropriately.
- Able to use logic, critical thinking, and reasoning to reach conclusions and solve problems.
- Adhere to policy and procedure requirements that are stringent, rigorous, and unwavering, including confidentiality of information and trustworthiness while dealing with sensitive information.
- Proficiency in English grammar, spelling, punctuation, and simple mathematical functions such as addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, percentages, ratios, etc.

- Communicate clearly, concisely, and effectively; relay details accurately; listen actively; think and act quickly.
- Follow instructions, spell correctly, and write clearly.
- Ability to remain calm in stressful situations, apply sound judgment, solve problems, make effective decisions, and act with integrity.
- Obtain information from hostile, confusing, and emotional callers
- Ability to manipulate callers, when necessary, to gain essential information.
- Effectively interact with people of different social, economic, and ethnic backgrounds.
- Ability to detect errors, determine causes, and apply corrections as appropriate.
- User-level skills in use of modern office equipment such as personal computers, fax machines, copiers, scanners and telephones.
- Compile and analyze operational data and prepare and maintain accurate records.
- Ability to provide high quality, accurate work and perform multiple tasks simultaneously.
- Ability to comprehend and follow written or verbal instructions, policies or procedures.
- Ability to type thirty-five (35) words per minute (WPM) and use advanced keyboarding techniques.
- Interpersonal skills necessary to be civil and effective with the public, co-workers, supervisors, representatives from other departments, and other emergency services agencies.
- Establish and maintain cooperative and professional working relationships with co-workers, supervisors, representatives from other departments, and other emergency services agencies.
- Ability to consistently demonstrate sound ethics and judgement.
- Skill in organizing and prioritizing tasks.
- Ability to set priorities and successfully handle competing demands.
- Use judgment and decision-making skills to rapidly evaluate situations, establish priorities, resolve matters, and pass on information, as needed.
- Ability to learn and retain new information and apply new techniques for applications or systems.
- Ability to comprehend, process and apply verbal and written skills appropriate to the job.
- Skilled researching and resolving complex problems.
- Learn quickly and retain public safety and technology training material.
- Ability to maintain confidentiality of information and professional boundaries.
- Maintain regular, reliable, and punctual attendance.
- Remember names, numbers, and locations accurately.
- Read and interpret geographical spatial data and maps quickly and accurately.
- Resilient and resourceful while coordinating high-risk, high-stress operations, with the objective of keeping all participants safe.
- Operate computer systems with specialized software and enter data via keyboard and software with speed and accuracy.
- Relentless problem solver.
- Friendly and tactful personality.
- Patient and resilient.
- High stress tolerance and high levels of adaptability.

