PROJECT PROSPECTUS

Public Safety Call Answer and Event Processing Times

26 August 2020

Background: A public-safety answering/access point (PSAP) refers to the call center where emergency calls for the police, fire department or EMS are received from mobile or landline callers/subscribers. For about 10 years, NFPA 1221 (now NFPA 1225) has had performance standards for the time it takes to answer an emergency call and the time it takes to interrogate the caller and notify the appropriate responders (NFPA 1221 7.4). The NFPA 1221 Technical Committee established the times that are indicated in the standard, however, there is no hard data that suggests that these times fit the physical limitations of a communication center.

Research Goal: The goal of this project is to collect call answer and processing time interval data from Public Safety Answering Points (PSAP) in the U.S., and analyze that data in order to establish reasonable standards for the public safety communications industry. This is to be accomplished by developing a survey/questionnaire and sending it all PSAPs with enough personal follow-up to ensure a statistically significant sample.

Project Tasks:

1. Literature Review. Review the existing guidance from NFPA 1221 regarding primary PSAP vs. Secondary PSAP. Also review and identify the monthly performance data that may be available from Public safety Agencies

2. Create a survey. Based on the information collected in Task 1, create a questionnaire survey to circulate to PSAP’s in the US. The survey should focus on capturing data around the time intervals for receiving calls, interrogating the caller, and notifying the appropriate responder. This data is typically captured by a computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system. The survey should also seek information on the limitations of the respective call centers. The anticipated outcome of this survey is a dataset of call answer and call processing times from the last 3-5 years. Additionally, to acquire the statistically significant sample size, staff time will be required to follow up with PSAPs. This data does not need to contain personally sensitive information, just time intervals.

3. Implement Survey. Once the survey is developed and reviewed by the project technical panel, circulate the survey to a statistically significant number of PSAP’s throughout the US (up to 6,000 PSAPs).

4. Statistical Analysis: Analyze the data in order to summarize average call answer and and event processing times that the Technical Committee can use to justify call answering and event processing standards.

5. Final Report: Compile all findings and analyses in one final report and review it with the project panel.

How this information will be used: Project deliverables will be useful in NFPA 1225 during the drafting of the 2025 edition.