

DISPATCHER SELF-SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE

A professional Dispatcher is a highly responsible, multi-functional public servant who must handle many tough requirements, often in crisis situations. The nature of the job includes these key elements:

- Mostly sedentary.
- Operate telephone, radio and computer equipment, often simultaneously.
- Answer 9-1-1 emergency calls and public inquiries, and dispatch police units.
- Usually routine call taking and dispatching, but periodically high-stress during emergencies.
- Work a 9-hour shift.
- Work with a team of one to four other Dispatchers.
- Occasional requirement for overtime.

This self-screening questionnaire provides a sense of what it's like to serve the public as a Dispatcher at the Springfield Police Department. It is intended to help you determine whether you are making a sound decision in applying for the position. Therefore, answer the questions honestly...to yourself. You are not required to divulge your answers; however, we will be happy to discuss any aspects of the position requirements.

Work Environment

Are you willing to work an irregular shift schedule during your probationary period (one year), where you might work days (7:00 am-4:00 pm) for several weeks, then change to the "graveyard" shift (10:30 pm-7:30 am)? Yes___ No___

Are you willing to rotate to any of three shifts—days, afternoons, or nights—and remain on that shift for several months? Yes___ No___

Are you willing to accept periodic last minute changes to your work schedule (such as mandatory overtime) that might require you to cancel personal plans? Yes___ No___

Are you willing to work weekends and holidays? Yes___ No___

Are you willing to work in a temperature-controlled environment that might be too cool or too hot for your personal preference? Yes___ No___

Are you willing to work a 9-hour shift without regular breaks? Yes___ No___

Are you willing to sit at a telecommunications console that restricts your movements to a 6-foot radius, except during an occasional break? Yes___ No___

Are you willing to spend the first six months of your employment in a training status during which you'll spend most of your time undergoing on-the-job training, receiving daily mentoring, critiques and evaluations? Yes___ No___

Are you willing to learn all facets of a multi-tasking job: call/complaint taking, automated data entry and transfer, law enforcement inquiries, radio communications / dispatching, equipment troubleshooting? Yes___ No___

Are you willing to read and study several hundred pages of manuals, and take written tests on a recurring monthly basis? Yes___ No___

This profession requires you to copy information as it is being received over telephone or radio, simultaneously digest what you hear and respond immediately. Is this something you can do? Yes___ No___

Are you willing to travel outside of the local area to attend professional training courses and seminars? Yes___ No___

Supervision and Evaluation

Are you willing to take direction from your supervisor and other seniors in front of your co-workers? Yes___ No___

Are you willing to be closely supervised and questioned routinely about why you followed a certain course of action without taking it personally? Yes___ No___

Are you willing to work under constant electronic monitoring that records all telephone and radio transmissions, or logs data entries? Yes___ No___

Job Stressors

Are you willing to listen to abusive and profane language over the phone and deal with it unemotionally? Yes___ No___

Are you able to deal with a crisis call—where a child has died, an officer injured, a woman assaulted—yet set it aside and continue to calmly deal with an irate citizen complaining of a barking dog? Yes___ No___

Are you able to deal calmly with angry people when their problems are not your fault? Yes___ No___

Do you comprehend that if you process a call incorrectly, it could contribute to someone's injury or loss of property, and it might incur liability for the City? Yes___ No___

If you answered "No" to any of these questions, you are not necessarily a poor candidate for telecommunications service at Springfield Police Department; however, you may want to reconsider applying for this position.

On the more positive side, a career as a public safety Dispatcher offers some personal rewards, some of which are intangible, such as:

- Satisfaction that you provide a vital service to the public.
- Awareness that citizens rely on you as the first "First Responder" to their calls for help.
- Pride in knowing that on a daily basis you help promote the protection and preservation of life, property, and community security.