



Board of Chosen Freeholders

County of Hunterdon
71 Main Street, Building #1
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MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: July 2, 2018

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Hunterdon County Department of Public Safety Communication Division Registers Nearly 200,000 Dispatches

Twenty-six municipalities have kept Hunterdon County's Communications Division busy with 198,694 dispatches for the combined Police Departments, Fire Companies, and Rescue Squads in the County, and over 150,000 calls and texts to the 9-1-1 center over the past year, according to the Department's Annual Report.

Freeholder John E. Lanza, the Freeholder Board's liaison for the Department of Public Safety, stated, "The County's Communication Division is a 24/7 operation. When calls come in for any type of emergency, a phone call or text will be responded to and services will be dispatched.

Hunterdon was the first in the state to offer county-wide 9-1-1 services and a central communications dispatch center back in 1976. This continues to be a vital service for all county residents, as the data in the Annual Report attests."

The Hunterdon County Communications System handles emergency calls for sixteen Municipal Police Departments, thirty Volunteer Fire Companies, sixteen First Aid and Rescue Squads, and four Mobile Intensive Care Units.

Other agencies dispatched are the Prosecutor's Office, Medical Examiner, Health Division, Public Works Department and the Parks and Recreation Division.

James Curry, the Communications Division Head who has long experience in law enforcement and public safety, said, "As a centralized Communications Center, the Hunterdon County Communications System is a major shared service and reduces duplicated services and wasted effort, increasing the efficiency of the link between the residents of Hunterdon County and the associated Public Safety agencies."



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The Annual Report provides some eye opening data in Hunterdon County:

Police dispatches make up the 165,739 calls

Basic Life Support (BLS) are the calls with the highest frequency, at 14,821

There were 9564 Advanced Life Support (ALS) calls in the last year

And 8570 Fire service calls.

Curry noted, "Other divisions might experience a diminution in service if operating shorthanded, but emergency response cannot. Emergency calls MUST be answered – in some cases even when there is no immediate first responder available to handle the matter. For certain calls, we have absolutely experienced the case where the dispatcher is literally the difference between life and death.

Additionally, behind the scenes, there are technicians that are ever vigilant. They ensure that phone calls are received, radio transmissions are heard, and other forms of technology function properly."

In conclusion, Curry reminded the public, "Calling 9-1-1 is your best option, but it is important to remember that you can also text 9-1-1. When citizens find it unsafe to talk, or for those with hearing impairment, texting is a 9-1-1 option in Hunterdon County and the entire state."

The Annual Report is available on the Hunterdon County website, at the following web address:
<http://www.co.hunterdon.nj.us/pdf/911/AnnualReport/AnnualReport2017-Communications.pdf>.