
CITY OF SAN ANTONIO

OFFICE OF THE CITY AUDITOR



Audit of Police and Fire Departments
9-1-1 Operations and Response Time Reporting
Project No. AU16-022
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Executive Summary

As part of our annual Audit Plan approved by City Council, we conducted an audit of the Police and Fire Departments. Specifically, we reviewed the City's 9-1-1 call answering, dispatching, and emergency response time reporting processes. The audit objectives, conclusions, and recommendations follow:

Determine if the City's 9-1-1 call answering process is properly managed.

Yes, the City of San Antonio's (City) 9-1-1 call answering process is properly managed. However, we identified the following areas that the Police and Fire Departments should address to further strengthen existing controls and processes surrounding the 9-1-1 call answering process.

Collectively, the Police and Fire Departments should:

- Develop, document, and test a joint business continuity plan for the 9-1-1 call center.
- Develop an aggressive outreach plan to educate the public on appropriate use of 9-1-1 and non-emergency numbers.
- Formalize responsibilities, expectations, obligations, and the nature of their arrangement with Bexar Metro 9-1-1 through a defined service level agreement or memorandum of understanding.

The Police Chief should:

- Evaluate and adjust staffing levels and schedules to meet National Emergency Number Association (NENA) call answering standards for emergency calls and internal standards for non-emergency calls.
- Verify that every employee working in the call center has completed the required FBI Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) security awareness training.
- Develop and maintain a sufficient documentation process (including backup records) of all required training.
- Develop and implement a call quality review process that: 1) regularly reviews calls for compliance with standards, and 2) provides feedback on a regular basis to individual call takers.

The Fire Chief should:

- Evaluate and formally adopt a standard such as the NENA standard for call taking operations.
- Evaluate and adjust staffing levels and schedules to meet the NENA call answering standards for emergency calls and internal goals for non-emergency calls.
- Develop a process to periodically (at least every five years) perform background checks on existing personnel working in the 9-1-1 call center.

- Develop and implement a call quality review process that: 1) regularly reviews calls for compliance to standards, and 2) provides feedback on a regular basis to individual call takers.
- Develop a plan to balance the cost of call takers and dispatchers with the need to provide professional medical and fire call taking and dispatching.

Note: In the spring of 2016, the Police and Fire Departments began addressing staffing and scheduling issues which had an immediate positive impact on call answering and abandoned rates. Charts representing the year-to-date 2016 data are in Appendixes E-G.

Determine if the Police and Fire Departments' response times are accurately calculated and properly reported.

Yes, the Police and Fire Departments' response times are accurately calculated and properly reported based on current departmental reporting models.

However, we make the following recommendations to further enhance the transparency and accuracy of the Police and Fire Departments' response time reporting process.

The Police Chief should:

- Expand the police response time definition of an emergency to include all life-threatening events.
- Expand the categories of response times reported (i.e. life-threatening, non-life-threatening in progress, non-life-threatening, other service requests, etc.).

The Fire Chief should track and report the average initial answer and Police call process times for medical and fire related calls as an element of the Fire Department's response time reporting to the public.

The Police and Fire Departments' management verbatim responses are in ***Appendix I*** on page 32.

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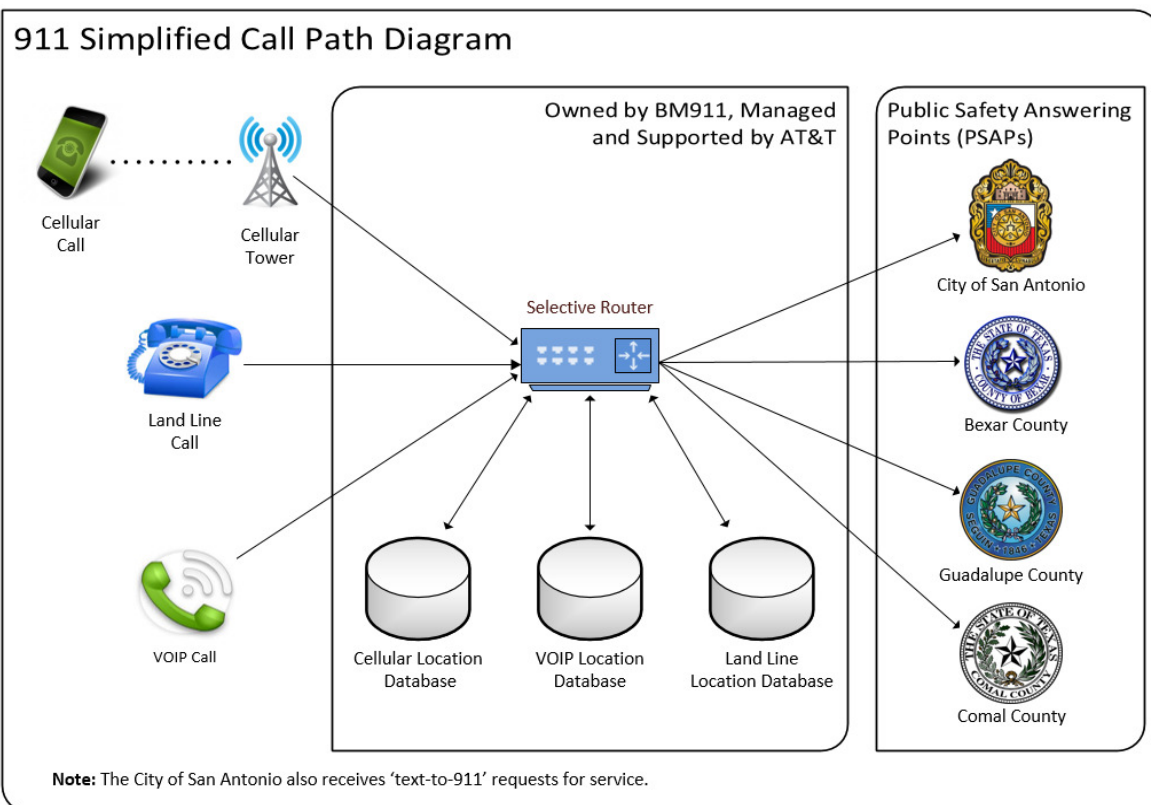
Background

The City of San Antonio's (City) 9-1-1 call center personnel are responsible for answering calls quickly, recording information accurately, and dispatching resources effectively. The call center received over 7,000 emergency and non-emergency calls per day on average during calendar year (CY) 2015.

Bexar Metro 9-1-1

In January 1987, the City joined the Bexar Metro 9-1-1 Network District (BM911). BM911 maintains a 9-1-1 emergency communication system that enables citizens in Bexar, Comal, and Guadalupe counties to quickly reach the appropriate Police or Fire Department. BM911 provides the City with computers, software, and support for the 9-1-1 call process. These services are provided at no charge to the City, as BM911 is funded through the 'Texas State 9-1-1 Fee' charged to citizens via cellular, VOIP, and traditional land line phone bills. The monthly fees range from 22 cents for a residential land line to 50 cents for a cellular phone.

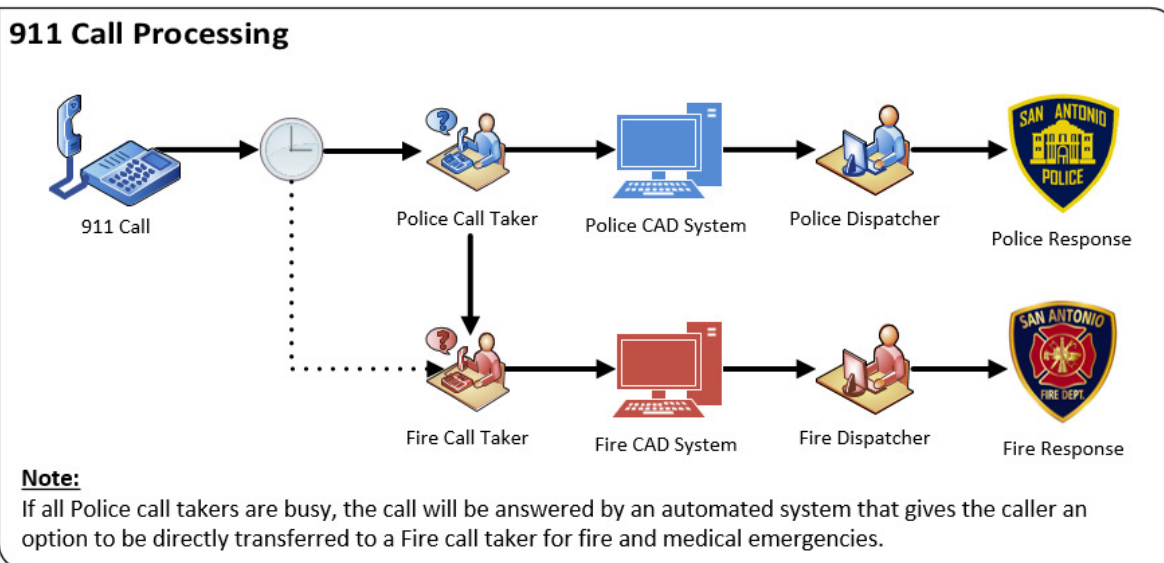
When a citizen calls 9-1-1, BM911's emergency communication system examines the caller's phone information (address, cellular position, etc.) and forwards the call to the correct emergency services answering point accordingly (e.g. San Antonio 9-1-1 Call Center, Bexar County Call Center, etc.). This process occurs almost instantaneously.



9-1-1 Call Process

9-1-1 calls are selectively routed to the appropriate 9-1-1 call center along transmission lines dedicated solely for 9-1-1 use based on approximate geographical location of the caller. A call taker at the call center receives a display on a computer monitor that automatically identifies the caller's address/location and telephone number. Should the call be disconnected, the call taker has the necessary information to call back. Further, should the caller be unable to identify his or her location, the 9-1-1 system displays the location from which the call is made, enabling a dispatcher to send emergency response personnel.

The City's 9-1-1 call center (a.k.a. public safety answering point or PSAP) is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to assist the public by taking calls and dispatching appropriate emergency services. The call center is staffed with Police and Fire Department personnel who operate independently but are co-located at the same call center facility. In most instances 9-1-1 calls are initially answered and screened by the Police Department call takers. When callers require assistance from the Fire Department, they are transferred to a Fire Department call taker.



All non-emergency (police and fire) calls are routed to the same City call center as 9-1-1 calls and are assigned to the appropriate group based on the 10-digit number dialed. Calls that come in on the Police's non-emergency number are routed to Police call takers and calls coming in on the Fire's non-emergency number are directly routed to Fire call takers. Non-emergency and 9-1-1 calls are answered by the same call takers; however, 9-1-1 calls are given a priority and are answered first.

Call Center Staffing

The entire Police side of the call center is staffed with civilian employees while the Fire side is staffed with uniformed (sworn) certified Emergency Medical Technician – Paramedics (EMT-Ps) or Licensed Paramedics. Below are the staffing levels and descriptions of key call center related roles as of April 21, 2016:

Role	Police Department (Civilian) Filled Positions	Fire Department (Uniformed) Filled Positions
Call Takers ¹	63	44 ²
Dispatchers ¹	59	
Expeditors	26	
Supervisors	12	4
Administrative / Support Staff	10	
Assistant Manager / Manager	5	1
Division Chief		1
Total	175	50

Call Taker: The call taker's role is to answer the call, confirm the caller's name and location, and inquire about the nature of the emergency. Once all the required information is obtained, the call information (incident) is forwarded to the dispatcher. A Fire call taker performs the same basic function as a Police call taker, but may also provide medical advice and recommendations to callers.

Dispatcher: The dispatcher's role is to view the available emergency resources and assign the best options for addressing the caller's needs. The Police and Fire Departments perform their own dispatching functions.

Expediter: The expeditor's role is exclusively a Police function that assists with non-emergency calls that do not require immediate police assistance or that only require a police report. The Expediter takes the incident details, creates reports, and assigns a follow-up unit to investigate (if needed).

Call Volume and Workload

In CY 2015, the 9-1-1 call center received over 1.5 million 9-1-1 emergency calls. This represents a 30 percent increase over CY 2012 as shown below.

Calendar Year	9-1-1 Emergency Calls ³	Increase over 2012
2012	1,200,993	n/a
2013	1,193,554	-0.6%
2014	1,376,542	14.6%
2015	1,561,630	30.0%

¹ Staffing level includes trainees that have completed classroom training and currently work on the call taking floor with supervisors.

² Uniformed personnel rotate between the Call Taker and Dispatcher roles depending on shift assignment.

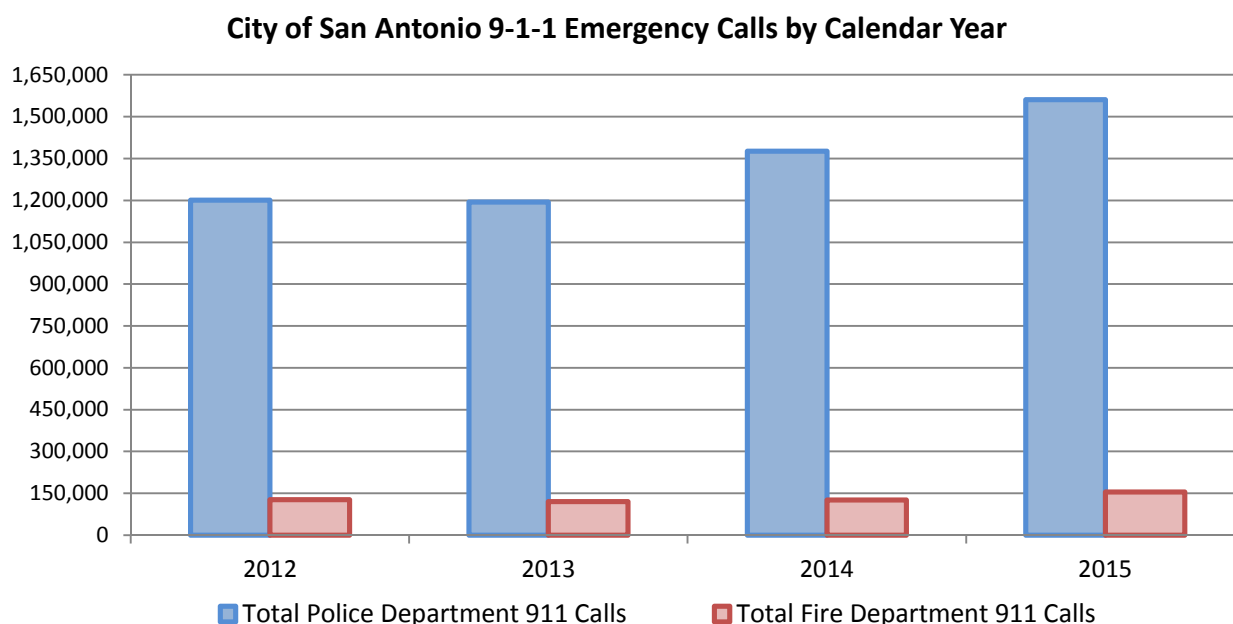
³ 9-1-1 emergency call volumes were taken from the ECaTS application described on page 6.

In CY 2015, the call center also received over one million non-emergency calls. Non-emergency calls are handled largely by Police Department expeditors and call takers.

The combined emergency call and non-emergency call workload has resulted in a sizeable abandoned call rate of over 20 percent for the City. This compares to an average six percent abandoned call rate for large call centers as reported in a 2009 George Mason University study.⁴

Calendar Year	9-1-1 Emergency Calls ⁵	Number of Abandoned Calls	Percent of Total
2012	1,200,993	241,746	20.1%
2013	1,193,554	233,743	19.6%
2014	1,376,542	281,104	20.4%
2015	1,561,630	367,745	23.5%

On average the Police Department facilitates almost 10 times more calls for service than the Fire Department as shown below.



Source: Data used in this graph was extracted from the

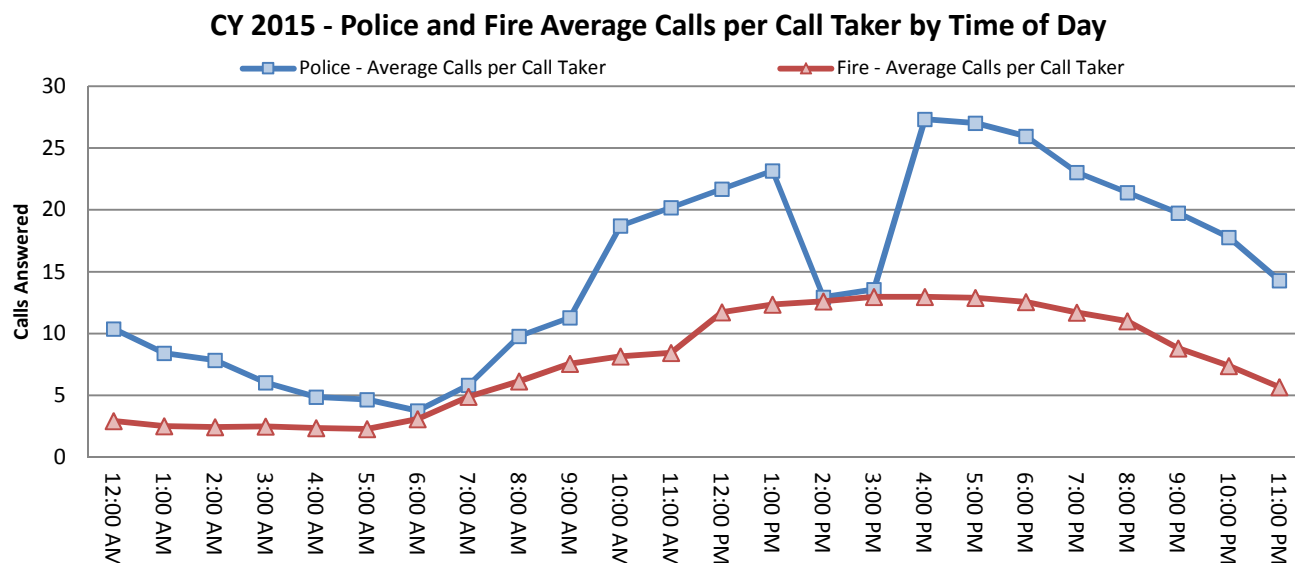
The Police and Fire Department's emergency and non-emergency call volumes fluctuate throughout the day. On average the Police Department experiences its lowest calls per call taker from 6:00 – 7:00 a.m. at 3.7 calls and its highest calls from 4:00 – 6:00 p.m. at 27.1. Similarly, the Fire Department experiences its lowest

⁴ Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO). Project Retains: *Staffing and Retention in Public Safety Communications Centers: A Follow-up Study*. January 2009 Research Report, p 7.

⁵ 9-1-1 emergency call volumes were taken from the ECaTS application described on page 6.

call per call taker at 5:00 – 6:00 a.m. at 2.3 calls and its highest at 3:00 - 5:00 p.m. at 12.9 calls.

On average, Police call takers answer 15 calls per hour individually while Fire call takers answer 7.7 calls per hour individually.



Source: Data used in this graph was extracted from the ECaTS application.

See Appendix C for a detailed breakdown of Police and Fire Department 9-1-1 calls by time of day.

2016 January – June Update

Low staffing levels in the Police Department and inefficient schedules caused long wait times and high call abandoned rates. During the course of the audit, the Police Department took action to correct issues related to staffing levels by hiring additional civilian call center personnel (call takers, dispatchers, etc.), promoting trainee call takers to independent call takers, and temporarily reassigning civilian expeditors as call takers. Also, the Fire Department, through training and internal meetings, refocused uniform call takers to promptly and efficiently answer calls. The combination of these efforts has had a positive impact reducing emergency and non-emergency caller wait times and decreasing the abandoned call rates through the first six months of 2016.

See Appendixes E-G for an update on call answering and abandoned rates.

Audit Scope and Methodology

The audit scope was from October 2014 through January 2016.

To establish our test criteria, we reviewed City Administrative Directives; Fire Department (SAFD), Police Department (SAPD), and Information Technology Services Department (ITSD) policies and procedures; Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) requirements; and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) Security Policies. We also examined the National Emergency Number Association (NENA) standards and National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards. When testing information technology, we also used the Government Accountability Office's (GAO) Federal Information System Controls Audit Manual (FISCAM).

We interviewed ITSD, SAPD, SAFD, and other non-City Agency management and staff to gain an understanding of 9-1-1 call center operations and public safety response time processes.

As part of our testing procedures we examined the following areas:

- Staffing levels and schedules
- Economic costs of 9-1-1 call center operations
- State and City employment requirements
- Police and Fire Department policies and procedures
- Call center performance versus professional standards
- CJIS compliance
- Call review procedures
- Service level agreements
- Public announcements and training on the use of 9-1-1
- Public safety response formulas and accuracy
- Reporting of public safety response times

As a result of testing, we relied on CAD system generated reports to verify response times, incident reviews, and other testing. We also relied on system generated reports from the Emergency Call Tracking System (ECaTS) application used to collect, analyze, and report 9-1-1 call related statistics. We do not believe that the absence of testing general and application controls for the ECaTS application had an effect on the results of our audit.

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Audit Results and Recommendations

A. General 9-1-1 Call Center Related Results

As part of our testing, we determined that the 9-1-1 call center's physical security and redundant utilities were effectively managed and aligned with generally accepted standards for call center operations. During our examination of the City's 9-1-1 call center, we identified the following areas that the Police and Fire Departments should address to further strengthen existing controls and processes surrounding the 9-1-1 call answering process.

A.1 Business Continuity Plan

The City does not have an adequate, up-to-date business continuity plan for 9-1-1 call center operations.

In the event the call center is rendered inoperable due to natural or man-made disasters, the City needs a defined and documented process to rapidly restore 9-1-1 call answering and dispatching functions. The plan should focus on minimizing the period of time needed to restore these essential functions.

The National Emergency Number Association (NENA) provides the following guidance related to business continuity plans for call center operations:

*"All plans require periodic review and revision. Disaster and Contingency Plans should be reviewed no less than annually. Revision should occur as frequently as needed to remain current. Areas of potential improvement, as found through drills, exercises and events should be used to revise and update plans."*⁶

The current 9-1-1 call center business continuity plan is outdated and does not address critical areas such as: backup workspace allocation, manpower allocations, current technology, etc. Additionally, some aspects of the current informal plan have not been tested or properly vetted.

During the course of the audit, the Cities of San Antonio and Austin entered into a reciprocal agreement to answer each other's 9-1-1 calls in the event that either call center is rendered inoperable. This agreement allows in-bound 9-1-1 calls to be answered by the alternate city for a short period of time while call taking personnel travel to alternate backup facilities. This agreement is designed to be an element of a larger business continuity plan and not a long-term call answering solution in the event of an emergency.

⁶ NENA PSAP Survivability Operations Information Document (OID) – 53-503, 6/9/2007.

Without a documented, defined, and effective business continuity plan, a disaster may result in the City being unable to answer 9-1-1 calls for an indefinite period, putting our citizen's health and well-being at risk.

Recommendation

The Police Chief and the Fire Chief should develop, document, and test a joint business continuity plan for the 9-1-1 call center.

A.2 Public Education on Use of 9-1-1

The City has not provided public outreach and education on the appropriate use of the 9-1-1 service.

The Police and Fire Departments have not provided adequate training for the public through public service announcements, website content, videos, etc. on the appropriate use of 9-1-1 and how to request non-emergency services.

The use of public education and awareness initiatives can be valuable in educating citizens of San Antonio on when and how to request emergency and non-emergency services.

Failure to properly train the public on how to use 9-1-1 and non-emergency numbers appropriately can have the following effects:

- Increased volume of inappropriate 9-1-1 and non-emergency calls
- Delayed call answering
- Increased costs to hire additional call takers
- Delayed dispatching of emergency services

Recommendation

The Police Chief and the Fire Chief should develop an outreach plan to educate the public on appropriate use of 9-1-1 and non-emergency numbers. This effort could include public service announcements, city highway billboards, updating city websites, and social media.

A.3 Service Level Agreement with BM911

The City does not have a service level agreement (SLA) with BM911.

Currently, BM911 provides caller location services, computers, software, and support vital for efficient call taking to the City's 9-1-1 call center. These tools are essential to the basic operations of the call center to identify the call location and

promptly dispatch emergency services. BM911 may also provide some limited backup call facilities in the event the City's 9-1-1 call center is rendered non-functional.⁷ These backup facilities are offered to 25 call centers located in Bexar, Guadalupe, and Comal Counties. In a large multi-county emergency, BM911's facilities would most likely be shared among all affected 9-1-1 call centers.

Without a defined service level agreement or memorandum of understanding, the responsibilities, expectations, and nature of the arrangement between the City and BM911 will remain ambiguous.

Recommendation

The City and the Bexar Metro 9-1-1 Network District should formalize responsibilities, expectations, obligations, and the nature of their arrangement through a defined service level agreement or memorandum of understanding.

⁷ Without the support of an SLA, the City is not guaranteed the use of BM911 back-up call taking facilities in the event of an emergency.

B. Police Department Audit Results

The Police Department is the City's primary public safety answering point (PSAP) in the 9-1-1 call center, while the Fire Department acts as the secondary PSAP. The Police Department manages the day-to-day operations, staffing, and training of the civilian call takers, expeditors, dispatchers, and support staff. Through our testing, we determined that the following general Police Department call center operations were effectively managed and aligned with industry standards:

- Managers are knowledgeable about call center operations.
- They have well defined policies and procedures.
- They have consistent and reportable internal metrics for tracking and monitoring the performance of the call center.
- Call takers answer calls in a professional manner, treat the caller with respect, and obtain needed information to assist the dispatcher.
- Police Department emergency and non-emergency response times are consistently and accurately calculated.

Additionally, in CY 2015, expeditors facilitated over 79,000 calls with police reports that uniformed police would otherwise have had to facilitate.

B.1 Police Staffing Levels

The Police Department 9-1-1 call center civilian call taker staffing levels are not sufficient to adequately meet call demand.

The 9-1-1 call center's primary function is to promptly answer and assist citizens with emergency and non-emergency requests for service. Historically, the Police Department has experienced long wait times and high abandoned call rates. Since 2012, the 9-1-1 abandoned call rate has increased from about 20 percent to over 23 percent as discussed in the background section of this report. Furthermore, during busy call periods, the wait time can exceed 30 seconds.

The National Emergency Number Association (NENA) standard for answering 9-1-1 calls is 90 percent of all emergency calls answered in 10 seconds or less. The Police Department has adopted this NENA metric as well as an additional service level metric requiring 80 percent of all non-emergency calls to be answered in 20 seconds or less.

Using an Erlang C staffing model,⁸ we evaluated the Police Department call center staffing needs based on the total 9-1-1 and non-emergency calls received and average call time in CY 2015. We also evaluated the total available yearly staff

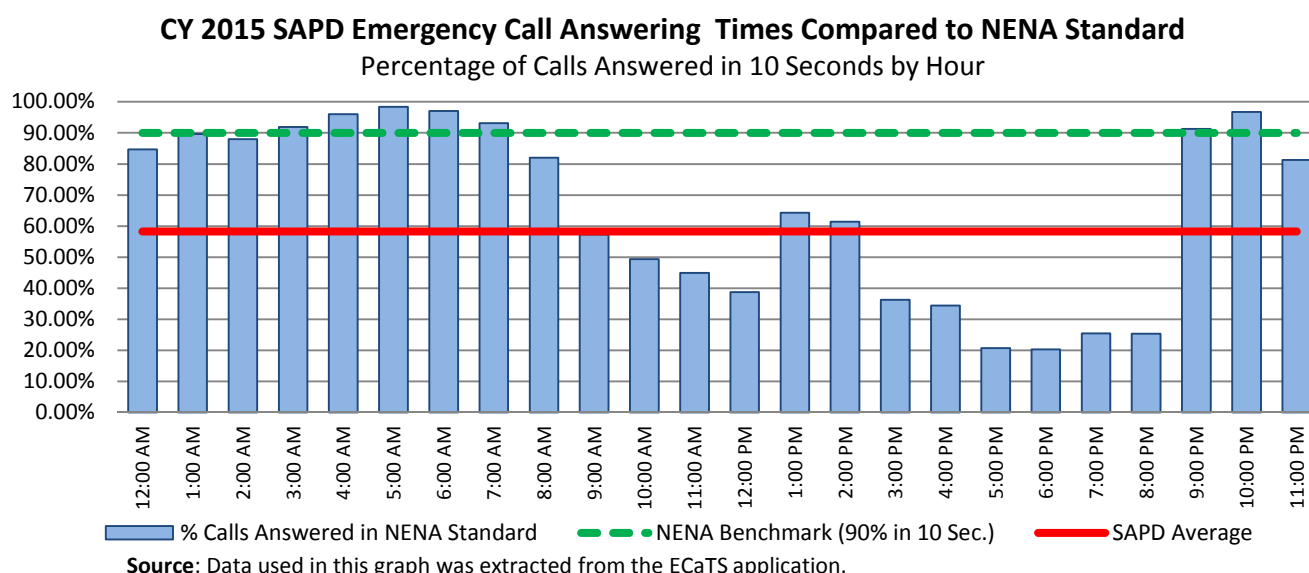
⁸ Erlang C is a modeling formula commonly used in call center scheduling to calculate delays, predict waiting times for callers, and determine the number of call takers needed to comply with specified metrics such as the NENA standard. It uses three inputs; the average number of calls per hour, the average call duration by hour, and the expected level of service (e.g. 90 percent of calls answered in 10 seconds or less).

hours (reduced for vacation, sick leave, training, etc.) to determine the total available working hours per employee. Based on our evaluations, the Police Department would need a minimum of 113 call takers instead of the current 89 (63 call takers plus 26 expeditors) to achieve the NENA standard of 90 percent of all emergency calls answered in 10 seconds or less.

Police Department Call Taker Staffing Requirements⁹	
Daily Required Call Taker Hours Using Erlang C Model	480
Yearly Required Call Taker Hours (480 Call Taker Hours X 365 Days)	175,200
Available Yearly Average Active Working Hours per Call Taker	1,554
Total Minimum Number Call Takers Required (Yearly Required Call Taker Hours (175,200) / Yearly Average Active Working Hours Per Call Taker (1,554))	113

We also determined that Police call taker scheduling did not align with high-volume call periods. The highest call volumes occur from about 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. However, during this period the Police Department had the second lowest scheduled number of call takers on duty. During this heavy call period, the average wait time for 9-1-1 calls was over 29 seconds (see Appendix A for call duration breakdown by hour).

In 2015, the Police Department answered only 58.24 percent of all 9-1-1 calls in 10 seconds or less; the average answer time was 19.1 seconds. The graph below shows the percentage of emergency calls that were answered within the NENA 10-second standard by hour of the day.

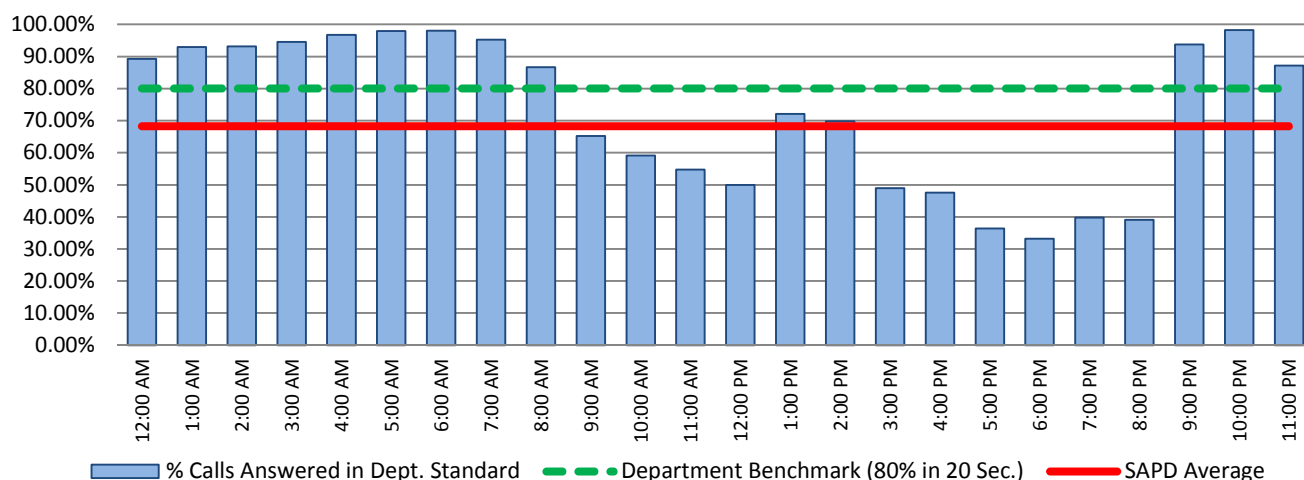


⁹ This calculation is based on CY 2015 call volumes. This evaluation was restricted to determining the staffing needed to meet the NENA standard based on total required call taking hours. It does not specifically account for additional call takers needed to staff the call center when employees are out sick or do not report for work for any reason. A schedule modeling staffing by time-of-day was not evaluated.

In 2015, only 68.24 percent of non-emergency calls were answered in 20 seconds or less with an average answer time of 1 minute, 12 seconds. The graph below shows the percentage of non-emergency calls that were answered within the call center's 20-second standard by hour of the day.

CY 2015 SAPD Non-Emergency Call Answering Times Compared to SAPD Standard

Percentage of Calls Answered in 20 Seconds by Hour



Source: Data used in this graph was extracted from the ECaTS application.

The Police Department used overtime to attempt to partly address staffing shortages. In fiscal year (FY) 2015, the Police side of the call center incurred just over \$466,000 in overtime pay, or over 19,000 hours of overtime. This equates to almost 12.5 full time call taker positions. While this level of overtime may be acceptable, the use of high levels of overtime is not sustainable for long periods of time. Excessive overtime typically lowers morale, decreases efficiency, increases chances for error, and increases employee turnover.

Long answering wait times for emergency calls adversely affects the safety and health of our citizens. This situation also results in high dropped call levels and operational inefficiencies; Police Department policy requires call takers to make two attempts to call back callers who hang up – even further exacerbating the problem since while attempting call-backs, they are not available to take new incoming emergency calls.

The Police Department has begun to address this issue with additional hiring and adding call takers to shifts that experience high call volumes. Also, the civilian expeditor role was suspended in the spring of 2016 and expeditors were reassigned as call takers. Civilian expeditor responsibilities have been temporarily assigned to a group of uniformed light-duty¹⁰ police officers. The light-duty officers currently process non-emergency calls or emails that do not require immediate

¹⁰ Light-duty is defined as temporary duty or assignment for police officers that as a result of illness or injury renders the officer unable to perform all of the job functions of a police officer, but who are able to perform administrative or non-strenuous activities while they recover from that illness or injury.

police assistance or that only require a police report. See Appendixes E-G for an update on effects of additional staff on call answering and abandoned rates.

Recommendation

The Police Chief should increase and adjust staffing levels and schedules to meet NENA and internal call answering standards for emergency and non-emergency calls.

B.2 CJIS Security Training

The Police Department does not have adequate controls to properly document and ensure that all employees working in the 9-1-1 call center have completed CJIS mandated security training.

The CJIS Security Policy requires that any individual working in a CJIS secured area, like the call center, receive security awareness training every two years. Additionally, Section 5.2.2 of the CJIS Security Policy requires that, “records of individual basic security awareness training and specific information system security training shall be documented, kept current, and maintained.”

The Police Department relied on and utilized a DPS managed online training and record keeping tool to document all CJIS training. In 2015, the online record management tool was upgraded and some records were lost. The Police Department did not maintain electronic or paper backups of these training logs.

We reviewed call center employee records to verify that employees had completed the CJIS required security awareness training and certification. We selected a sample of 55 employees out of a population of 160 working at the call center and found two Police Department employees with issues; one had never completed the training exam and one had expired training. Additionally, we found that some supporting documentation was missing or not readily available.

During the audit, Police Department management took corrective action and the two employees in question completed the CJIS required security awareness training and certification.

Failure to manage and document compliance with CJIS security policies and requirements could result in the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) and FBI placing the City on probation or even suspending access to criminal justice information (CJI).

Recommendation

The Police Chief should:

- 1) Verify that every employee working in the call center has completed the required CJIS security awareness training.
- 2) Develop and maintain a sufficient documentation process (including backup records) of all required training.

B.3 Call Quality Review

The Police Department does not have a call quality review process.

We examined a sample of calls and found that they were handled in a professional manner and in compliance with Police Department policies. However, no process existed for a consistent and continuous review of calls for quality. The current review process is reactionary and initiated as the result of complaints or open records requests.

NENA suggests that each call center develop a process to: 1) randomly review calls for quality and compliance with policy, and 2) provide meaningful and timely feedback to call takers.

Due to its workload, the Police Department has historically devoted all available resources to assisting with call taker and other essential job functions, resulting in no additional time for performing call quality reviews.

A call review process is a valuable tool to identify, train, and improve the call taking function. Without a functional call review process, improvements may not be identified, calls may be mishandled, and sufficient information needed to efficiently dispatch emergency services may not be gathered.

Recommendation

The Police Chief should develop and implement a call quality review process that:

- 1) regularly reviews calls for compliance to standards, and
- 2) provides feedback on a regular basis to individual call takers.

B.4 Emergency Response Times

The Police Department uses a narrow definition of what constitutes an emergency in determining response time reporting.

In CY 2015, the Police Department responded to over 1.29 million incidents. These incidents range from serious life-threatening events to non-life-threatening events, including nuisance calls. The Police Department currently defines an emergency

call as a “priority 1, code 3” or “lights and sirens” incident. This type of incident is defined as one of the following types of crimes:

- Officer/EMS in trouble in progress
- Officer in trouble in progress
- Rape in progress
- Robbery in progress
- Robbery of individual in progress
- Shooting In progress
- Cutting in progress

Of the 1.29 million incidents the Police Department responded to in CY 2015, only 4,863 (or 0.38 percent) were used to calculate the Police Department’s emergency response time. Other life-threatening events such as assault in progress, suicide in progress, hold up alarm in progress, etc., are excluded from the emergency definition.

When compared to other major metropolitan cities in Texas, the City of San Antonio has the narrowest definition of an emergency. Other cities either use a broader definition or report on more emergency levels. For example, the Fort Worth Police Department classifies and reports emergency calls using two categories:

- 1) ‘Priority One Calls’ (emergency/critical), by their nature or the circumstances surrounding the call, pose an immediate threat to human life.
- 2) ‘Priority Two Calls’ (emergency/immediate response) do not meet the criteria for priority one, but by their nature require an immediate response.

Using a narrow definition of an emergency may provide the public with inaccurate expectations for an emergency response time. Limiting the reported response time to include only the most critical emergency events skews the reported response time to be shorter than it would be if other types of public-perceived emergencies were included.

Recommendation

The Police Chief should:

- 1) Expand the police response time definition of an emergency to include all life-threatening events.
- 2) Expand the categories of responses reported (life-threatening, non-life-threatening in progress, non-life-threatening, other service requests, etc.).

C. Fire Department Audit Results

The Fire Department operates as the secondary public safety answering point for the City. All medical and fire service requests are initially answered by the Police Department and then forwarded to the Fire Department call taking and dispatching unit. This unit is staffed with EMT-P and licensed paramedics that perform the role of call taker and dispatcher. As part of our testing, we determined that the following general call center operations were effectively managed and aligned with industry standards:

- Managers are knowledgeable about fire and medical call center operations.
- They have adequately defined policies and procedures.
- They have consistent and reportable internal metrics for tracking and monitoring the performance of the emergency response processes.
- Call takers answer calls in a professional manner, treat the caller with respect, and obtain needed information to assist the dispatcher.
- The Fire Department accurately calculates and reports emergency and non-emergency response times based on current departmental reporting models.

C.1 Formal Call Taking Standard

The Fire Department has not adopted a formal call taking or call center operating standard for answering calls.

While the Fire Department informally subscribes to the NENA standard (i.e. 90 percent of all emergency calls answered in 10 seconds or less) for call taking, the standard has not been formally adopted or assimilated into its policies and procedures.

A formally adopted standard for call talking provides added structure and guidelines for employees. Standards also come with expected service levels that can be measured and reported.

Without a formally adopted standard, the Fire Department may not be addressing the emergency needs of our citizens nor complying with industry standards.

Recommendation

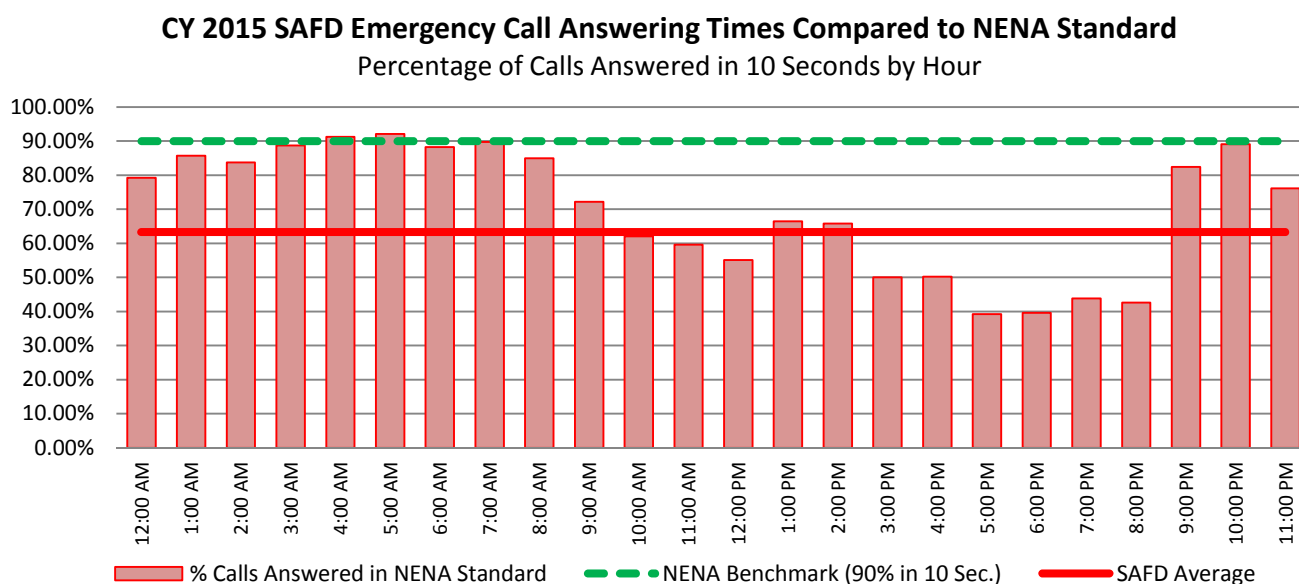
The Fire Chief should evaluate and formally adopt a standard such as the NENA standard for call taking operations.

C.2 Fire Department 9-1-1 Call Center Staffing Levels

The Fire Department call taker staffing level and shift structure is not sufficient to adequately meet call demand.

As mentioned above in observation B.1, the NENA standard for call center operations for answering calls is 90 percent of all emergency calls answered in 10 seconds or less. The Fire Department also has informally adopted the goal of answering 80 percent of all non-emergency calls in 20 seconds or less.

In 2015, the Fire Department answered 63.29 percent of all 9-1-1 calls in 10 seconds or less versus the standard of 90 percent. Their average 9-1-1 answer time was 16.2 seconds. Refer to Appendix B for a breakdown of call answer times by hour. Additionally, the Fire Department's active¹¹ call taking staffing levels did not align with the busiest call periods. The Fire Department's highest call volume occurs from 3 p.m. to 8 p.m.; however, its highest active staffing levels are from 7 a.m. to 11 a.m. During this evening period, the average wait time for 9-1-1 emergency calls is over 20 seconds. The graph below shows the percentage of Fire Department emergency calls that were answered within the NENA 10-second standard by hour of the day.



Source: Data used in this graph was extracted from the ECaTS application.

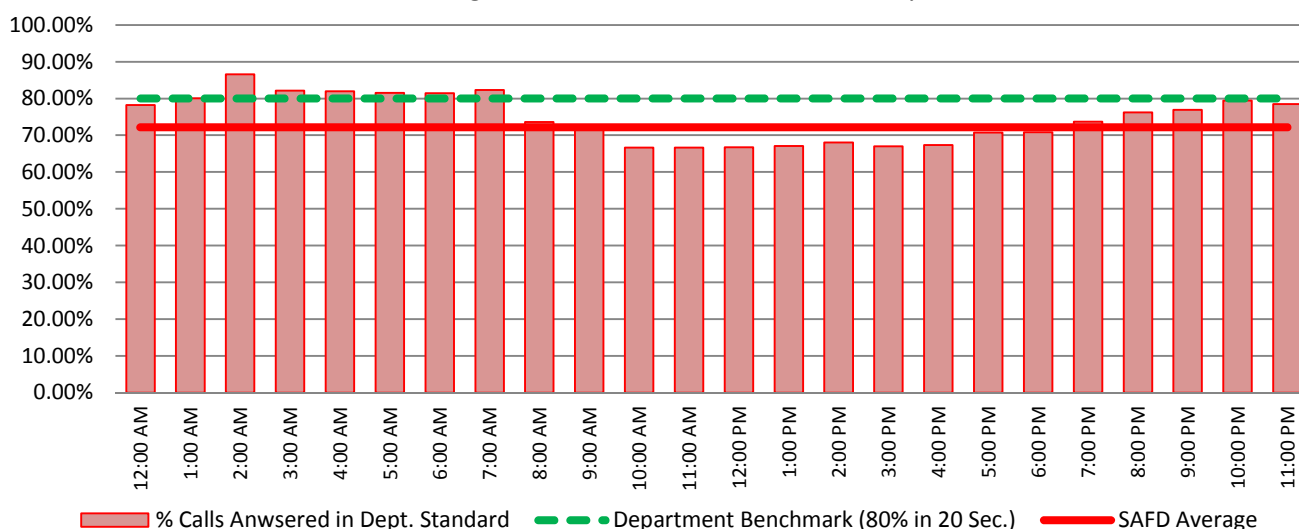
In CY 2015, 72.14 percent of non-emergency calls were answered in 20 seconds or less, with an average answer time of 13.20 seconds. The graph below shows

¹¹ Active call taking refers to time directly devoted to answering 9-1-1 and non-emergency calls; about 17 hours per call taker/dispatcher in every 24-hour shift worked.

the percentage of non-emergency calls that were answered within the Fire Department's internal 20-second goal by hour of the day.

CY 2015 SAFD Non-Emergency Call Answering Times Compared to SAFD Standard

Percentage of Calls Answered in 20 Seconds by Hour



Source: Data used in this graph was extracted from the ECATS application.

The Fire Department's side of the call center employs 44 call takers/dispatchers, four supervisors, one executive officer and one division chief. On a daily basis the Fire Department side of the call center is staffed with 11 EMT-P and licensed paramedics and one supervisor, all working 24-hour shifts.

Using an Erlang C staffing model, we evaluated the Fire Department call center staffing needs based on the total 9-1-1 and non-emergency calls received and average call time in CY 2015. We determined that 44 call taker/dispatchers, the number currently employed, should be sufficient to meet the NENA standard, assuming they all work mandated overtime. However, in a given 24-hour shift, each uniformed call taker/dispatcher is scheduled for almost 7 hours of 'on-call' or downtime. This time can be used to rest, eat, relax, or complete other administrative tasks. Consequently, seven of every 24 hours (28.8 percent of every employee's shift) are not spent answering calls – this amounts to 27,740 hours per year of down time. At any given time, two to four uniformed employees are on downtime and thus not answering calls, which contributes to the NENA standard not being met.

Additionally, overtime is currently used to address normal employee vacancies (vacation, training, etc.) and unscheduled time off (e.g. sick time). The Fire Department call center staff worked an average of over 850 hours of overtime per employee in CY 2015.¹²

¹² In CY 2015, the Fire Department call center staff incurred over \$2 million in overtime (over 41,000 hours at about \$50/hour on average).

Properly staffing Fire call taker/dispatcher positions would allow the City to effectively and promptly take fire and medical requests for service. Improper active staffing levels have a direct negative impact on the safety and health of our citizens, answering times, and quality of service.

Recommendation

The Fire Chief should adjust staffing levels and schedules to meet the NENA call answering standards for emergency calls and the Fire Department's informal standard of 80 percent in 20 seconds for non-emergency calls. This may include, but is not limited to:

- 1) Reducing downtime, particularly during high call volume times.
- 2) Moving to a standard 8-, 10-, or 12-hour shift.
- 3) Increasing staffing levels to cover normal employee vacancies and unscheduled time off.

C.3 CJIS Criminal History Reviews

The Fire Department does not have adequate controls to comply with CJIS employee criminal history reviews.

The City's call center is considered a CJIS secured environment since 9-1-1 personnel have access to CJIS systems. As such, all employees working in the call center secured environment are required to comply with FBI and DPS requirements.

The CJIS Security Policy, section 5.12.1.1, requires that all employees working in a CJIS controlled environment submit to and pass an initial background check. Additionally, the FBI recommends that employees undergo background re-investigations every five years.

The FBI mandates that no employee convicted of felony be permitted to work in a CJIS controlled area. DPS adds to this requirement, barring individuals convicted of a class B misdemeanor or higher from working in a CJIS controlled environment for a set period.

The Fire Department was unaware of the requirement and did not have a process in place to periodically perform background checks (at least every five years) on its employees working in the call center.

Without a documented, defined, and effective process for periodically reviewing employee backgrounds, the City may not be complying with FBI and DPS CJIS security requirements. Failure to comply with CJIS requirements could result in the

DPS and/or FBI placing the City on probation, or even suspending the City's access to criminal justice information.

Recommendation

The Fire Chief should develop a process to periodically (at least every five years) perform background checks on existing personnel working in the 9-1-1 call center.

C.4 Call Quality Review

The Fire Department does not have a call quality review process.

As part of the audit process, we examined a sample of calls and found that they were handled in a professional manner and in compliance with Fire Department policies. However, no process existed for a consistent and continuous review of call quality. Their current review process is reactionary and initiated through citizen or employee complaint. However, supervisors have the option to listen to calls while in progress.

NENA suggests that each call center develop a process to: 1) randomly review calls for quality and compliance with policy, and 2) provide meaningful and timely feedback to call takers.

A call review process is a valuable tool to identify, train, and improve the call taking function. Without a functional call review process, improvements may not be identified, calls may be mishandled, and sufficient information needed to efficiently dispatch emergency services may not be gathered.

Recommendation

The Fire Chief should develop and implement a call quality review process that: 1) regularly reviews calls for compliance with standards, and 2) provides feedback on a regular basis to individual call takers.

C.5 Uniform Staffing Costs

The use of uniform employees to staff the Fire Department side of the call center's call taker and dispatching function is costly to the City.

Many 9-1-1 call centers throughout the country are staffed exclusively (or mostly) by civilians. For example, within Texas, the City of Houston uses civilians to answer medical and fire calls. In the nationwide study performed in 2009 by George Mason University mentioned previously, 90 percent of the 9-1-1 call center

respondents (626 employees from 128 different call centers located across the country) reported that they were civilians as noted in the excerpt below:

“Most of the employees reported that they are civilians (90 percent), whereas a small percentage indicated that they are sworn personnel in law enforcement (five percent), fire (two percent), or something else (three percent). Those indicating something else included civilians who worked in fire, law, or EMS or otherwise sworn civilians. Employees of small centers were significantly less likely to be civilian (81 percent) compared to employees of medium (94 percent) or large (93 percent) centers.”¹³

The average annual cost to employ one uniformed Fire Department employee as a call taker/dispatcher in FY 2015 was \$173,097 compared to \$69,266 for a Police civilian call taker/dispatcher position; a difference of \$103,831.

Total Average Cost of 9-1-1 Call Center Staff Uniformed Employees vs. Civilian		
Remuneration Component	Fire Department Uniformed	Police Department Civilian
Average Salary Pay ¹⁴	\$ 67,625.51	\$ 45,511.97
Average Incentive Pay ¹⁵	\$ 18,083.20	\$ 855.03
Average Overtime Pay	\$ 45,971.22	\$ 2,882.37
Average Employee Benefits	\$ 41,416.89	\$ 20,016.68
Average Total Cost	\$ 173,096.82	\$ 69,266.05

Based on FY 2015 actual expenses, the Fire Department’s total employee cost (salary, overtime, incentives, and benefits) to staff its call center was \$8.6 million. We estimate the total employee cost to staff the Fire Department with civilian call takers and dispatchers would be \$4.2 million (about \$4.4 million less). Refer to Appendix D for a more detailed breakdown of annual savings by staffing the Fire Department side of the call center with civilians.

Staffing the Fire Department side of the call center with civilian call takers and dispatchers would allow the Fire Department to reassign experienced uniformed personnel to fire stations throughout the City. Additionally, civilianizing these positions could save the City approximately \$4 million annually.

¹³ Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials-International Retains Project: *Staffing and Retention in Public Safety Communications Centers: A Follow-up Study*, p 18.

¹⁴ Salary pay consists of base or hourly salary.

¹⁵ Incentive pay includes: Clothing Allowance, Fire Certification Pay, Longevity Pay, E.M.T. Certification Pay/Paramedic Certification Pay, Educational Pay, Language Skills Pay, Tuition Reimbursement, Administrative Assignment Incentive, etc.

Recommendation

The Fire Chief should develop a plan to balance the cost of uniform call takers and dispatchers with the need to provide professional medical and fire call taking and dispatching. The plan may include:

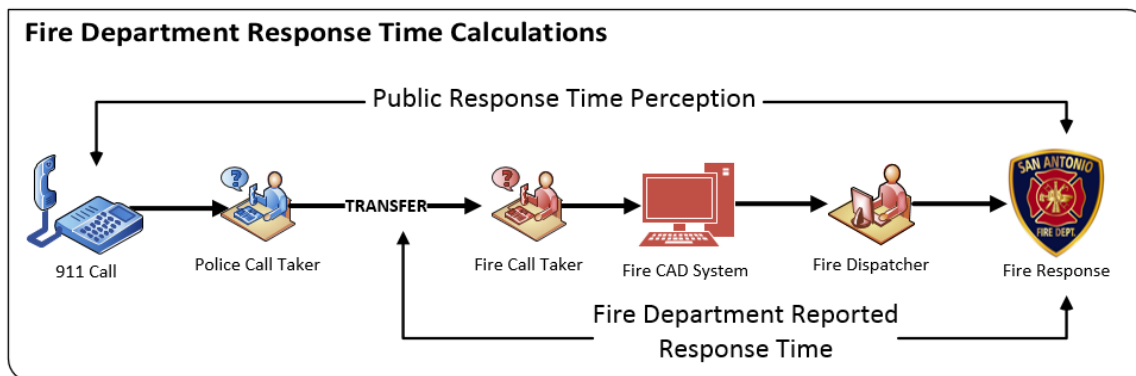
- 1) Implementing a hybrid staffing model that utilizes both uniform and civilian staffing to meet call taking and dispatching demands.
- 2) Moving uniform call takers and dispatchers to the field while simultaneously staffing vacated positions with civilians.

C.6 Reported Emergency Response Times

The Fire Department's reported emergency response times exclude the initial Police call taker time.

Fire Department response times to medical, fire, and other requests are reported to City management and indirectly to the public through the annual budget presentations and the City's Adopted Operating and Capital Budget.

Generally, the public perception of an emergency response time starts when the caller dials 9-1-1 and ends when the first responder arrives. The Fire Department operates as a secondary public safety answering point for the City. All medical and fire service requests are initially answered by the Police Department and then forwarded to the Fire Department call taking and dispatching unit. Currently, the reported Fire Department response time begins when the call is transferred to or directly answered by the Fire Department and ends when first responders arrive at the emergency location as shown in the diagram below.



However, this calculation currently excludes initial wait time and the time that the Police call taker uses to assess the nature of the call.

While the Fire Department does not have direct control over initial caller wait time and Police talk time, from the public's point of view, it is all part of a single process

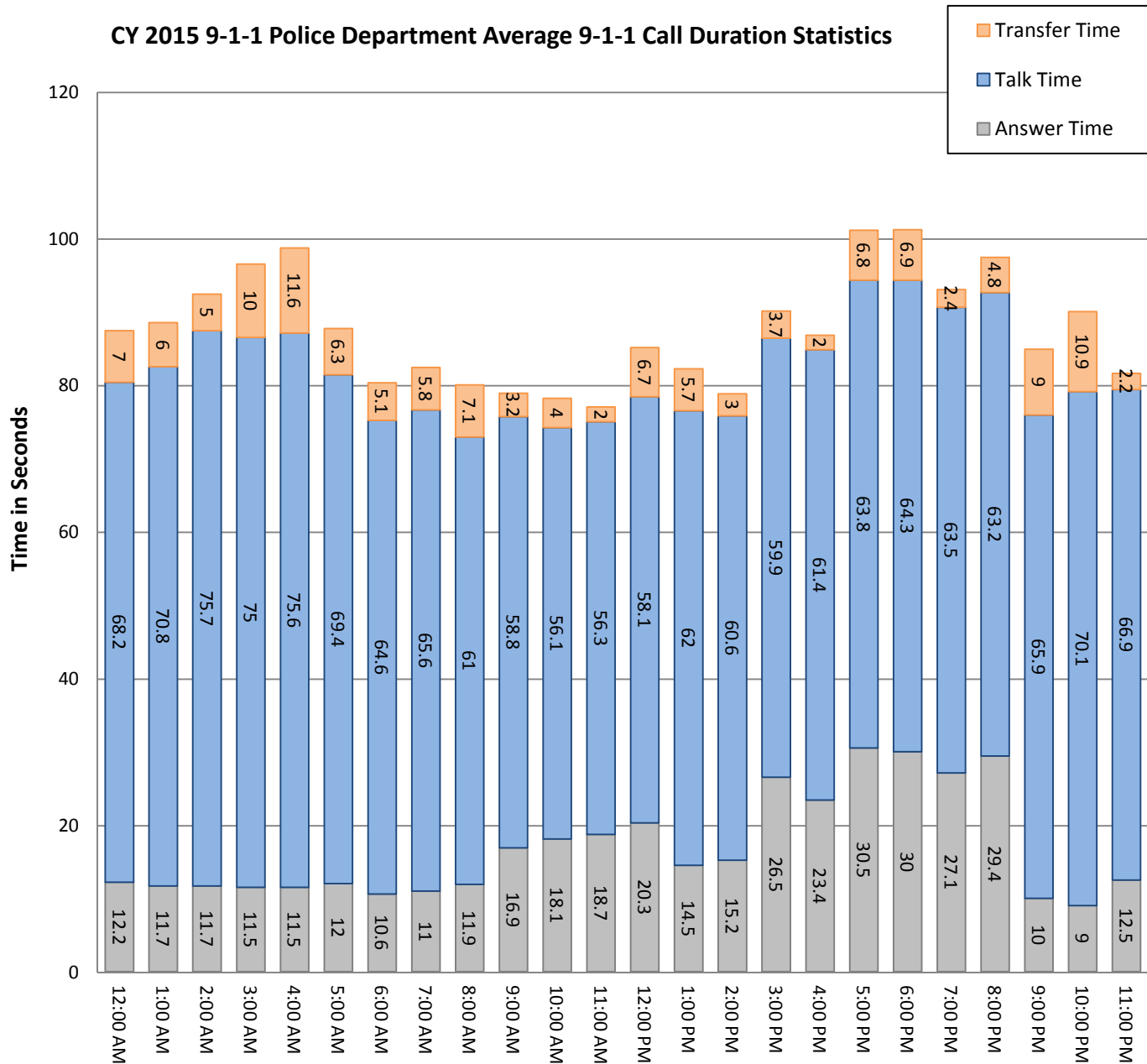
and should be reported as such. For calls transferred to the Fire Department, the initial call wait time and Police talk time averaged 36 seconds for the January – June 2016 time period. Excluding Police answering time from the reported response time understates the total time a citizen actually waits for emergency services.

The practice of excluding the Police call taker portion of an emergency call distorts the Fire Department's response time that is reported to the public. Additionally, this results in an unrealistic response time expectation in the public's mind.

Recommendation

The Fire Chief should track and report the average initial answer and Police call process times for medical and fire related calls as an element of the Fire Department's response time reporting to the public.

Appendix A – Police Department Call Phase Times



Source: Data used in this graph was extracted from the ECATS application.

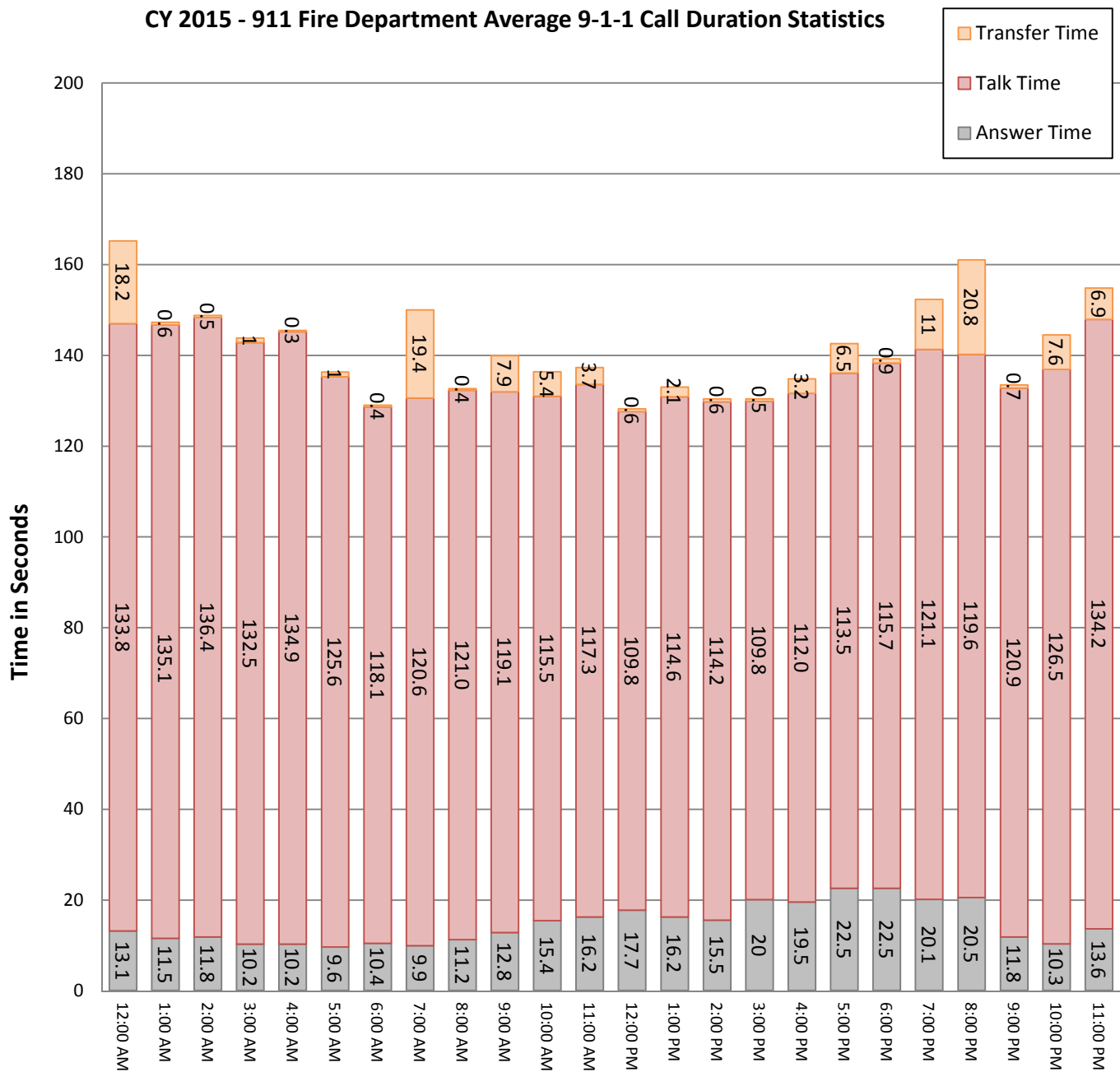
Key Time Descriptions:

Talk Time: Talk time is the actual time the call taker is conversing with the caller.

Transfer Time: Transfer time includes all time used to transfer calls to Police Department Expeditors, the Fire Department, or to other non-City agencies.

Answer Time: Answer time is the average time a caller waits to talk to the initial Police Department call taker.

Appendix B – Fire Department Call Phase Times



Source: Data used in this graph was extracted from the ECATS application.

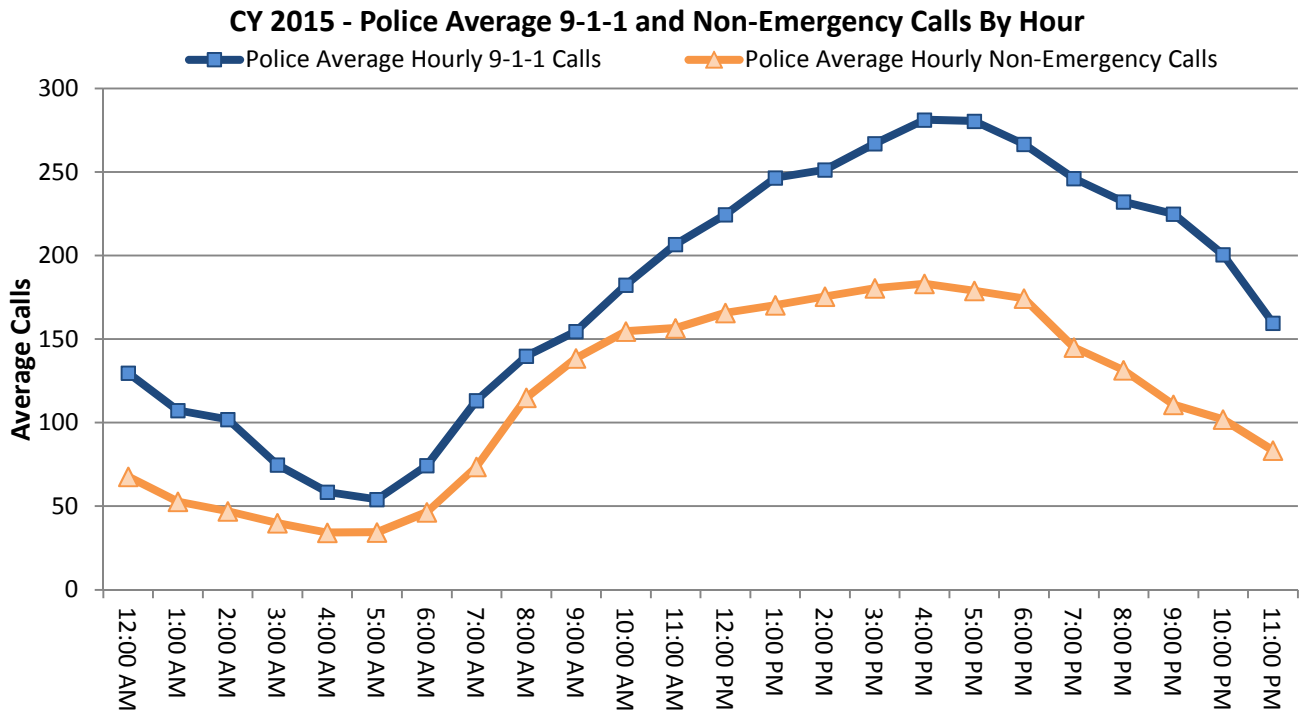
Key Time Descriptions:

Talk Time: Talk time is the actual time the call taker is conversing with the caller.

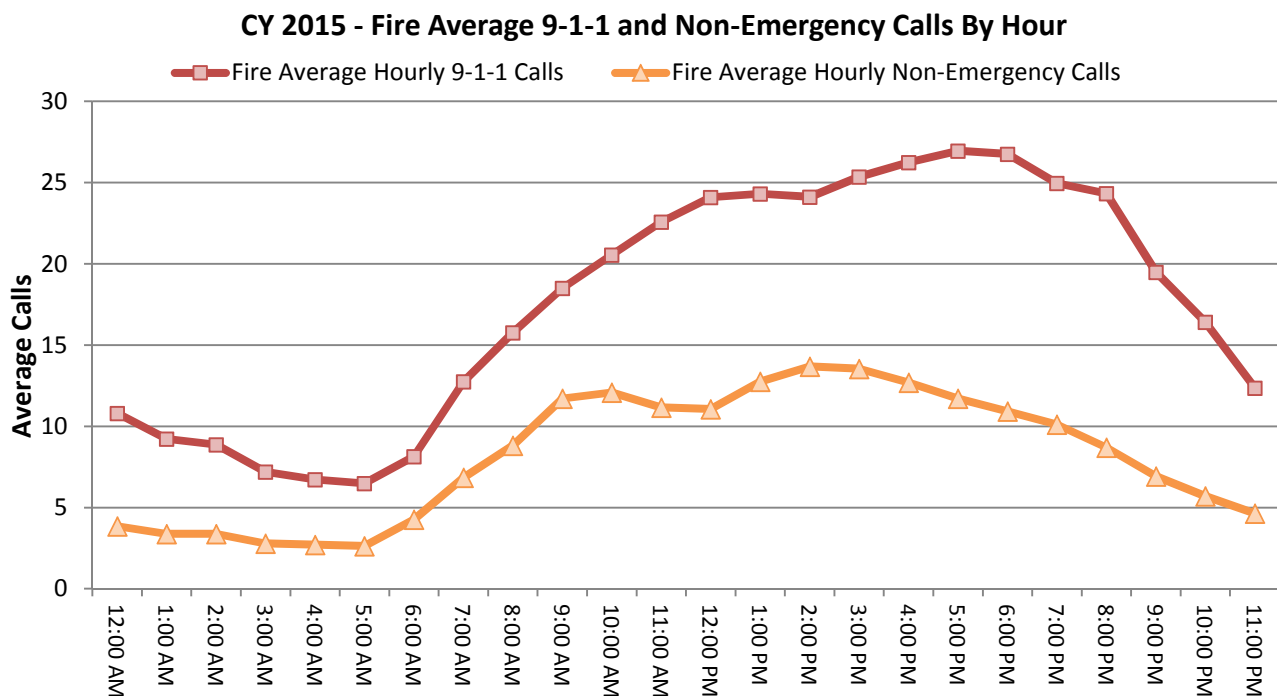
Transfer Time: Transfer time includes all time used to transfer calls to the Police Department, other non-City Fire Departments, or to other non-City agencies.

Answer Time: Answer time is the average time a caller is on hold after the call has been transferred from the Police Department to the Fire Department.

Appendix C – Call Center Call Volume by Hour



Source: Data used in this graph was extracted from the ECaTS application.



Source: Data used in this graph was extracted from the ECaTS application.

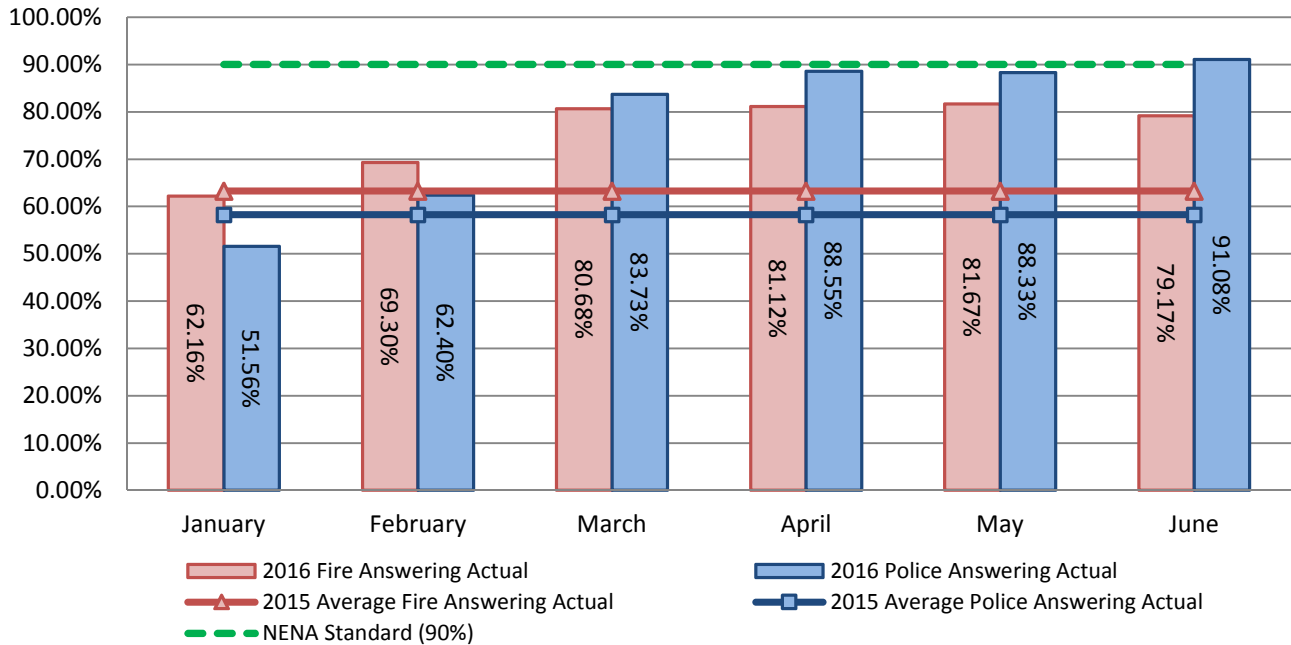
Appendix D – Fire Department Uniform vs. Civilian Personnel Costs

Using the calculated required active staffing hours from the Erlang C model, we determined total annual employee costs to staff the Fire Department call center with civilians based on FY 2015 actual expenses. Additionally, we compared the results to the current Fire Department staffing levels.

Estimated Costs to Staff the Fire Department Call Center with Civilians and Potential Savings		
Total FY 2015 Cost for a Staff of 50 Uniformed Employees		\$ 8,654,841
Estimated Cost to Staff the Fire Department Side of the Call Center with Civilians:		
Daily Active Call Taker / Dispatcher hours Required Based on Erlang C Required Staffing Levels to Meet NENA Standards	212	
Yearly Active Call Taker / Dispatcher hours Required (212 Hours X 365 Days)	77,380	
Yearly Average Active Civilian Working Hours	1,554	
Total Required Call Taker / Dispatcher Positions (77,380 Required Hours / 1,554 Civilian Hours in a Year)	50	
Additional Overstaffing and Administrative Positions①	11	
Total Civilians Required to Staff the Fire Department Side of the 9-1-1 Call Center	61	
Average Civilian Employee Cost	\$ 69,266	
Total Estimated Cost for a Staff of 61 Civilian Employees (61 employees x \$69,266 / employee)		\$ 4,225,229
Difference – Potential Savings to the City		\$ 4,429,612
① Administrative positions include supervisors, training officers, call review, and a manager.		

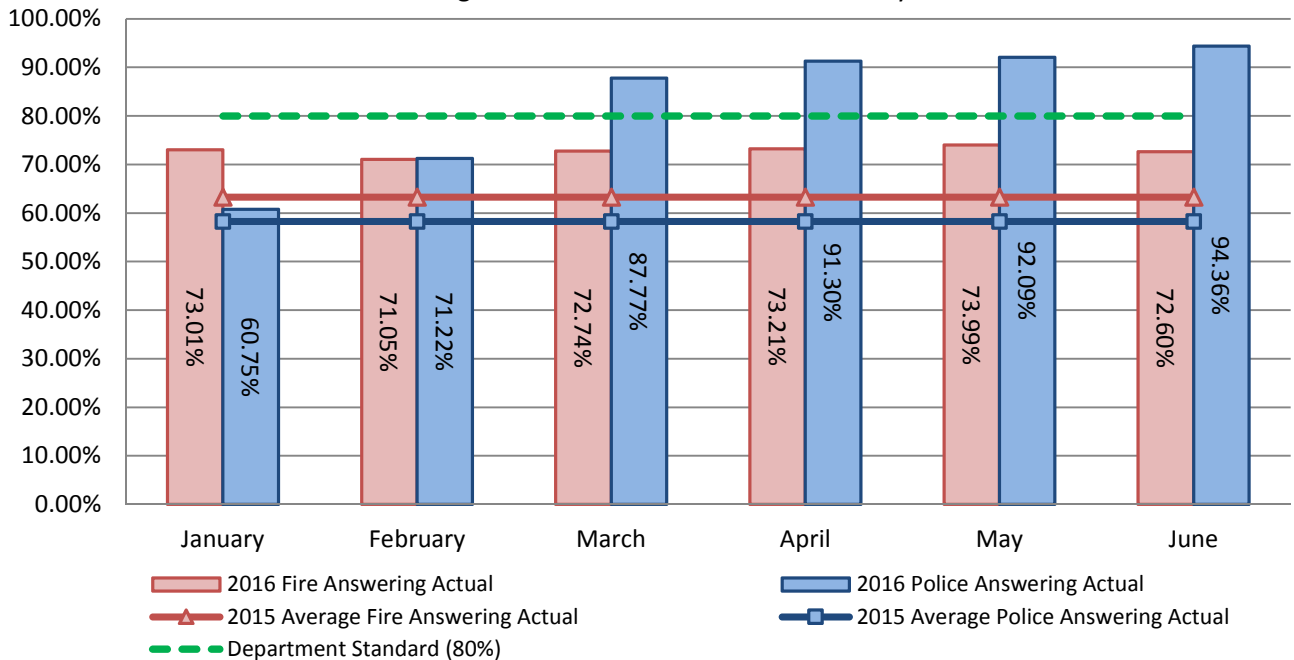
Appendix E – 9-1-1 & Non-Emergency Calls Jan – Jun 2016

Jan - Jun 2016 SAPD & SAFD Emergency Call Answering Times Compared to NENA Standard
Percentage of Calls Answered in 10 Seconds by Hour



Source: Data used in this graph was extracted from the ECaTS application.

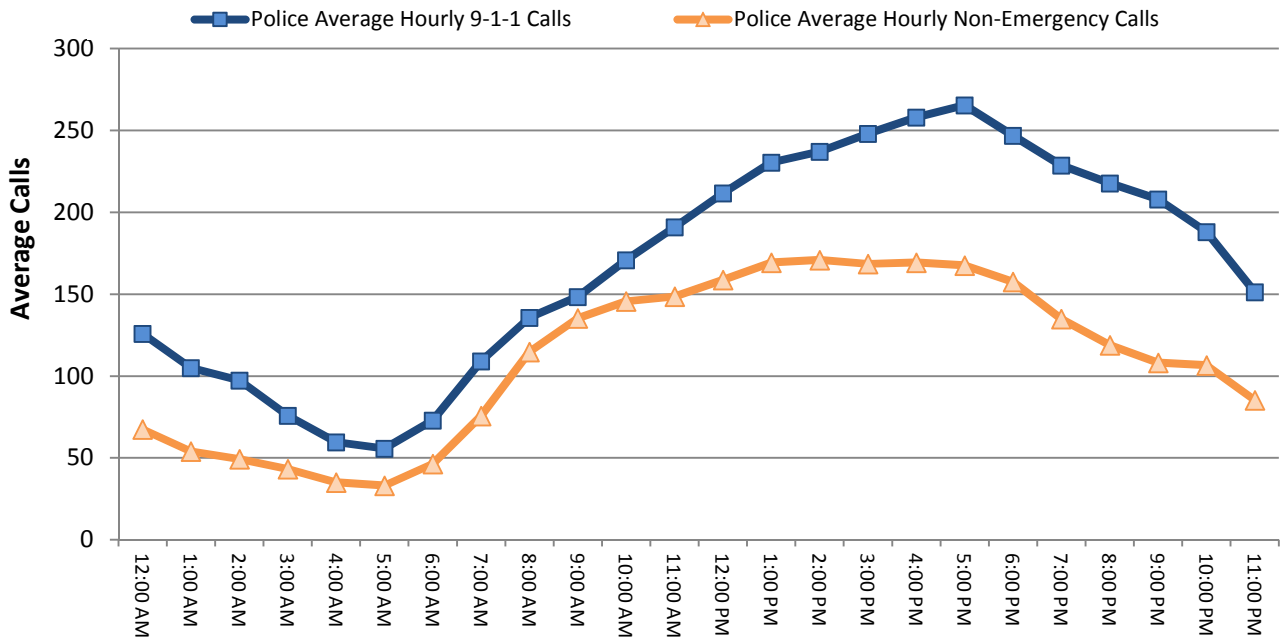
Jan - Jun 2016 SAPD & SAFD Non-Emergency Call Answering Times Compared to SAFD Standard
Percentage of Calls Answered in 20 Seconds by Hour



Source: Data used in this graph was extracted from the ECaTS application.

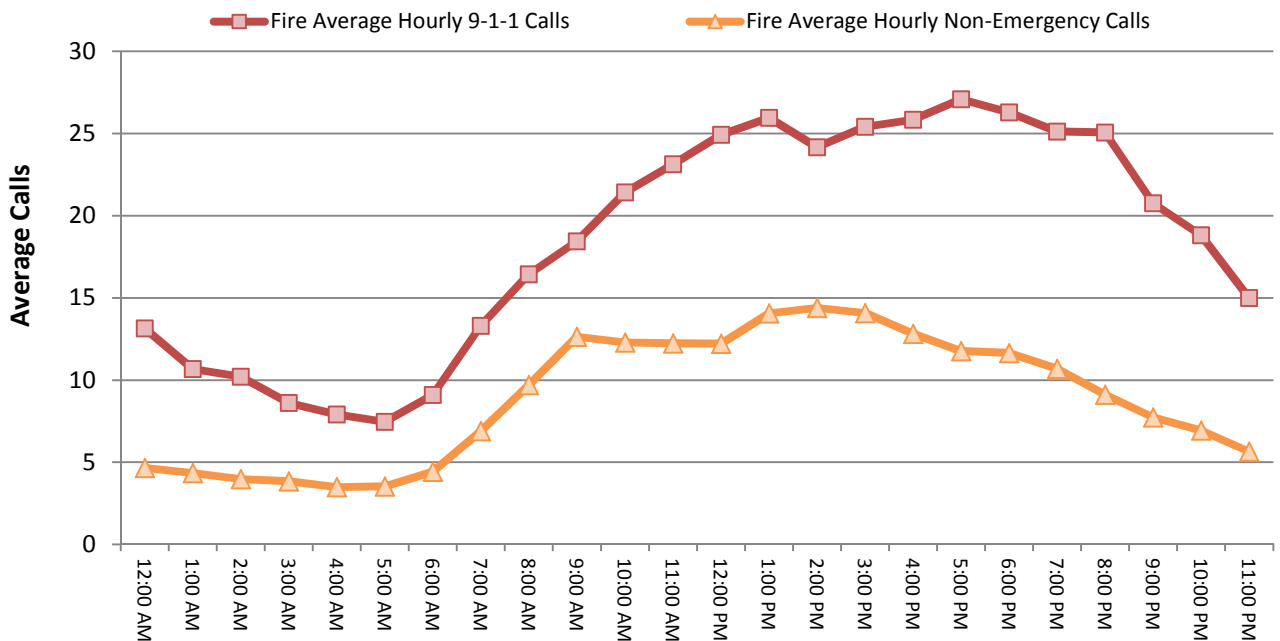
Appendix F – Call Volume by Hour Jan – Jun 2016

Jan - Jun 2016 - Police Average 9-1-1 and Non-Emergency Calls By Hour



Source: Data used in this graph was extracted from the ECATS application.

Jan - Jun 2016 - Fire Average 9-1-1 and Non-Emergency Calls By Hour



Source: Data used in this graph was extracted from the ECATS application.

Appendix G – Police Department Abandoned Call Rates

Calendar Year	Yearly Abandoned Call Rate
2012	20.10%
2013	19.60%
2014	20.40%
2015	23.50%
2016 Jan - Jun	19.35%
Calendar Year 2016 by Month (Jan – Jun)	
January 2016	24.46%
February 2016	21.49%
March 2016	16.87%
April 2016	18.29%
May 2016	17.93%
Jun 2016	17.82%

Source: Data used in this graph was extracted from the ECaTS application.

Appendix H – Staff Acknowledgement

Mark Bigler, CPA-Utah, CISA, CFE, Audit Manager
Matt Howard, CISA, Auditor in Charge
Holly Williams, CISA, CRISC, Auditor
Daniel Kuntzelman, Auditor

Appendix I – Management Response



CITY OF SAN ANTONIO

P.O. Box 839966
SAN ANTONIO TEXAS 78283-3966

August 22, 2016

Kevin W. Barthold, CPA, CIA, CISA
City Auditor
San Antonio, Texas

RE: Management's Corrective Action Plan for AU16-022 Audit of 9-1-1 Operations and Response Time Reporting

The Police and Fire Departments have reviewed the audit report and have developed the Corrective Action Plans below corresponding to report recommendations.

Recommendation					
#	Description	Audit Report Page	Accept, Decline	Responsible Person's Name/Title	Completion Date
A.1	Business Continuity Plan The Police Chief and the Fire Chief should develop, document, and test a joint business continuity plan for the 9-1-1 call center.	8	Accept	Steve Baum Assistant Police Director Vance Meade Deputy Fire Chief	Q3 FY 2017

Recommendation					
#	Description	Audit Report Page	Accept, Decline	Responsible Person's Name/Title	Completion Date
	Action plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update existing 911 Business Continuity Plan with descriptions of how SAFD and SAPD Communications Units will cooperatively utilize the existing resources at the Regional Emergency Operations Center (REOC) during an emergency. The Business Continuity Plan will document the 911 call-handling process defined in the Inter-Local Agreement between the City of San Antonio and City of Austin. Staff will receive training on their roles. The plan will be verified through tabletop exercises. The plan will be tested in a live environment at minimum, at least every six (6) months. 				
A.2	Public Education on Use of 9-1-1 The Police Chief and the Fire Chief should develop an outreach plan to educate the public on appropriate use of 9-1-1 and non-emergency numbers. This effort could include public service announcements, city highway billboards, updating city websites, and social media.	8	Accept	Steve Baum Assistant Police Director SAFD Public Information Officer	Kick off Q1 FY 2017 Ongoing effort
	Action plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the near term, the SAPD PIO, with assistance from the Office of Government and Public Affairs, is creating a public service announcement (PSA) campaign will utilize the Department's social media and COSA website to educate the public on the use of 911 and non-emergency calls. Additional efforts are planned for fiscal year 2017 to will include a variety of public education components, potentially including but not limited to public service announcements and city highway billboards, plus continued use of social media and city websites. 				

Recommendation					
#	Description	Audit Report Page	Accept, Decline	Responsible Person's Name/Title	Completion Date
A.3	Service Level Agreement with BM911 The City and the Bexar Metro 9-1-1 Network District should formalize responsibilities, expectations, obligations, and the nature of their arrangement through a defined service level agreement or memorandum of understanding.	9	Accept	John Rodriguez/ Assistant Director	ITSD to present ILA to City Council by Q4 FY 2016 ILA Final Q1 2017
	Action plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ITSD is leading the effort to formalize an Inter-Local Agreement (ILA) to address the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Support ○ 911 software maintenance ○ 911 supporting software maintenance ○ The use of the 911 system 				
B.1	Police Staffing Levels The Police Chief should increase and adjust staffing levels and schedules to meet NENA and internal call answering standards for emergency and non-emergency calls.	13	Accept	Steve Baum Assistant Police Director	Interim steps completed Q4 FY 2018

Recommendation					
#	Description	Audit Report Page	Accept, Decline	Responsible Person's Name/Title	Completion Date
	<p>Action plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on recommendations from the SAPD's 911 consultant regarding the Department's staffing to meet NENA 911 call handling standards, the following staffing increases have been requested in the 2017 budget: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 42 additional staff in 2017 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 28 Call Takers 9 Supervisors 5 Support (3 Quality Assurance and 2 Paralegals) 35 additional staff in 2018 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 23 Call Takers 9 Supervisors 3 Support (1 Assistant Manager and 2 Training Officers) As interim steps, the Center has implemented the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expeditors are handling 911 calls Voluntary overtime is used to cover peak call times. Temporary staff are assigned to peak call times. Added 25 Call Takers and 5 Support staff during mid-year adjustments Yearly reviews of the Center's workload will be completed for budget improvement requests. 				
B.2	<p>CJIS Security Training</p> <p>The Police Chief should:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Verify that every employee working in the call center has completed the required CJIS security awareness training. Develop and maintain a sufficient documentation process (including backup records) of all required training. 	14	Accept	Steve Baum Assistant Police Director	Q1 FY 2017

Recommendation					
#	Description	Audit Report Page	Accept, Decline	Responsible Person's Name/Title	Completion Date
	Action plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The newly hired Training Officers will track all training in the Emergency Communications Center. The Training Officers will augment CJIS training tracking by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electronically track training via existing vendor systems, Create internally tracked rosters Update employee files with copies of related certifications 				
B.3	Call Quality Review The Police Chief should develop and implement a call quality review process that: 1) regularly reviews calls for compliance to standards, and 2) provides feedback on a regular basis to individual call takers.	14	Accept	Steve Baum Assistant Police Director	Q3 FY 2017
	Action plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SAPD has requested three (3) quality assurance positions in the 2017 budget, allowing for creation a proactive QA program. The QA program will provide consistent employee feedback on the quality of call answering, dispatch and expediting functions. Analyze available QA software, used to gather data on emergency call handling, which will allow QA Analyst to perform more efficiently. 				
B.4	Emergency Response Times The Police Chief should: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Expand the police response time definition of an emergency to include all life-threatening events. Expand the categories of responses reported (life-threatening, non-life-threatening in progress, non-life-threatening, other service requests, etc.). 	15	Accept Accept	Joseph MacKay, Deputy Police Chief	Q4 FY 2016 Q1 FY 2017

Recommendation					
#	Description	Audit Report Page	Accept, Decline	Responsible Person's Name/Title	Completion Date
	Action plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SAPD already includes all life threatening events as emergencies, and responds to them as either a Code 2 or 3 emergency response. Code 2 responses allow the officer to travel no more than 10 miles over the speed limit while Code 3 responses are not bound by this procedure. All other procedures for Code 2 and 3 calls are the same (General Manual, Section 609): Lights and siren are activated; come to complete stop at stop signs and red lights; reduce speed at; reduce speed in school zones during school hours and near large crowd areas; exercise due regard for safety. Non-life threatening calls receive a Code 1 response, no lights and siren, and all traffic laws and speed limits are followed. The SAPD is currently reviewing the types of calls assigned to each category and will be increasing the level of some Code 1 calls up to Code 2, and potentially some Code 2 calls up to the level of Code 3. Average response times are currently reported using two categories – emergency calls and all calls. To provide greater transparency into response time reporting, the SAPD will modify its reporting to include three separate response time reports – Code 3 Emergencies, Code 2 Emergencies, and Code 1 Non-Emergency. 				
C.1	Formal Call Taking Standard The Fire Chief should evaluate and formally adopt a standard such as the NENA standard for call taking operations.	16	Accept	Vance Meade Deputy Fire Chief	Q4 FY 2016
	Action plan: The SAFD agrees with this recommendation, and has formally adopted the NENA standard				

Recommendation					
#	Description	Audit Report Page	Accept, Decline	Responsible Person's Name/Title	Completion Date
C.2	<p>Fire 9-1-1 Call Center Staffing Levels</p> <p>The Fire Chief should adjust staffing levels and schedules to meet the NENA call answering standards for emergency calls and the Fire Department's informal standard of 80 percent in 20 seconds for non-emergency calls. This may include, but is not limited to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Reducing downtime, particularly during high call volume times. 2) Moving to a standard 8-, 10-, or 12-hour shift. 3) Increasing staffing levels to cover normal employee vacancies and unscheduled time off. 	19	Accept	Vance Meade Deputy Fire Chief	Q1 FY 2017
<p>Action plan:</p> <p>1)The SAFD is assessing a change in On Call schedules to more efficiently address call volume. It should be noted that On Call personnel are available on premise, and currently provide an immediate response to spikes in call volume, large/major incidents or a request for Command vehicle response.</p> <p>2)Shift options will be examined to determine any advantages can be had by moving to a different format.</p> <p>3)The staffing model will continue to be assessed on an annual basis. While additional staffing would cut down on overtime, it will not save on cost overall and may create issues with employee retention.</p>					
C.3	<p>CJIS Criminal History Reviews</p> <p>The Fire Chief should develop a process to periodically (at least every five years) perform background checks on existing personnel working in the 9-1-1 call center.</p>	20	Accept	Vance Meade Deputy Fire Chief	Q1 FY 2017
<p>Action plan:</p> <p>The SAFD agrees with this recommendation. The Arson Bureau will be providing CJIS checks on a regular basis in line with CJIS requirements</p>					

Recommendation					
#	Description	Audit Report Page	Accept, Decline	Responsible Person's Name/Title	Completion Date
C.4	Call Quality Review The Fire Chief should develop and implement a call quality review process that: 1) regularly reviews calls for compliance with standards, and 2) provides feedback on a regular basis to individual call takers.	20	Accept	Vance Meade Deputy Fire Chief	Q2 FY 2017
Action plan: The SAFD agrees with this recommendation, and is in the process of creating a quality review process					
C.5	Uniform Staffing Costs The Fire Chief should develop a plan to balance the cost of uniform call takers and dispatchers with the need to provide professional medical and fire call taking and dispatching. The plan may include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Implementing a hybrid staffing model that utilizes both uniform and civilian staffing to meet call taking and dispatching demands. 2) Moving uniform call takers and dispatchers to the field while simultaneously staffing vacated positions with civilians. 	22	Decline		

Recommendation					
#	Description	Audit Report Page	Accept, Decline	Responsible Person's Name/Title	Completion Date
	<p>Action plan: All personnel assigned to the Communications Division are licensed or certified Paramedics, and must have worked for an established period of time in the EMS Division prior to selection and assignment to Communications. Their field experience provides them the ability to give life saving medical intervention assistance to callers. This type of service cannot be efficiently or effectively given by civilian staff that have either minimal or no medical training or background. Additionally, as TCFP certified Firefighters, uniform dispatchers can provide critical assistance to Incident Commanders during complex emergency incidents through their ability to anticipate additional resource requirements and rapidly changing scene conditions. This type of assistance cannot be expected from a civilian dispatcher.</p> <p>SAFD is exploring an option to have a consultant, experienced in dispatch operations, provide a review and recommendations on operational staffing options and their potential impact on 9-1-1 Operations.</p>				
C.6	<p>Reported Emergency Response Times</p> <p>The Fire Chief should track and report the average initial answer and Police call process times for medical and fire related calls as an element of the Fire Department's response time reporting to the public.</p>	23	Accept		
	<p>Action plan: While the SAFD recognizes the need to track the call transfer times between the Police and Fire calltakers, employees used for this process are controlled by the Police Department. Transfer times between the Police calltakers and Fire Department dispatchers should be tracked by the Police Department and reported to the Fire Department on a regular basis to ensure the process is efficiently executed. These transfer times will be reported to the public by Police and Fire.</p>				

We are committed to addressing the recommendations in the audit report and the plan of actions presented above.

Sincerely,

Audit of Police and Fire Departments
9-1-1 Operations and Response Time Reporting



William McManus
Police Chief
San Antonio Police Department

11-23-16

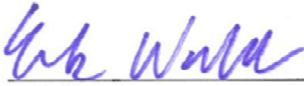
Date



Charles N. Hood
Fire Chief
San Antonio Fire Department

11/23/16

Date



Erik Walsh
Deputy City Manager
City Manager's Office

11/30/16

Date