

Job Evaluation Report

Fire and Police Commission Meeting: July 14, 2016

Fire Department

Current	Recommendation
Fire Equipment Dispatcher PR 6NN (\$38,628 - \$51,547) FN: Additional \$11 per shift for acting as Fire Equipment Dispatch Supervisor	Fire Equipment Dispatcher PR 5IN (\$46,347.34 - \$55,824.86 with Probationary Increment of \$47,969.48) FN: Additional 5% for leadworker, curriculum development, classroom, or peer training duties. FN: Appointment at any rate in the range based upon related emergency communications experience and credentials with the approval of Employee Relations. FN: Additional \$11 per shift for acting as Fire Equipment Dispatch Supervisor

Action Required

In the Salary Ordinance, under Pay Range 6NN, delete the title "Fire Equipment Dispatcher (1)" and footnote "1" in its entirety; under Pay Range 5IN, add the title "Fire Equipment Dispatcher (3)(4)(5)(6)" with footnote "6" to read as following: "(6) An employee who receives a temporary assignment to Fire Dispatch Supervisor for at least four (4) hours of a full work shift shall receive an additional eleven (\$11.00) dollars per work shift.

Background

The Fire Department has requested that the Department of Employee Relations study the job classification of Fire Equipment Dispatcher, comprised of 21 authorized positions. Employees in this group answer calls from the public and other sources requesting medical and/or firefighting services and dispatch appropriate equipment and personnel to the scene of incidents. In carrying out this request, the following documentation was reviewed:

- Job analysis questionnaires completed by employees on the first, second and third shifts and reviewed by their immediate supervisor
- A revised job description for Fire Equipment Dispatcher
- Job performance aids used by Fire Equipment Dispatchers, including protocols for emergency medical services
- The staffing schedule for July, 2016
- Salary information for other public safety dispatchers compiled by a Dispatcher
- A list of Dispatchers who have resigned within the last 10 years indicating those who had resigned with less than one year on the job

In order to obtain first-hand information regarding the duties and responsibilities performed, three Fire Equipment Dispatchers, one Fire Dispatch Supervisor and one manager were interviewed at the Fire department's emergency communications/dispatch center located at 2323 North 49th Street. In addition, Dispatchers were observed answering calls, obtaining information from callers, providing instructions to callers regarding medical emergencies, and dispatching fire equipment and personnel. The primary purpose of these interviews was to obtain a detailed understanding of the duties and responsibilities performed and the degree to which changes had taken place in duties and responsibilities.

Duties and Responsibilities

Fire Equipment Dispatchers promptly answer and process incoming emergency and nonemergency telephone calls from the public and other parties. Police Department Emergency Communications Operators forward calls from the 911 system to the Fire Department that require firefighting or emergency medical assistance. The type of calls received range from minor to major medical emergencies to stabbings, shootings, fires, auto accidents, downed electrical wires, marine accidents, and others. Callers may be in an hysterical, panicked, or extremely angry when they call, which makes obtaining information much more difficult.

The vast majority of calls received by Fire Equipment Dispatchers are related to medical emergencies. When speaking with callers, Dispatchers ask a series of scripted questions regarding the issue presented. As the Dispatchers speak with callers, they calm or reassure them as necessary, type information about the call and caller into on-screen forms, dispatch appropriate fire and medical equipment and personnel, and notify field personnel and other required parties. The information that has been typed on-screen is then forwarded to the fire personnel while they are *en route* to the incident. Importantly, Dispatchers also provide callers with instructions to follow prior to when fire/medical personnel arrive.

Fire Equipment Dispatchers must determine the number and type of apparatus to dispatch according to location of the incident, nature and severity of the emergency, and established protocols. They also receive and transmit information regarding the call to field personnel via radio. While fire/medical personnel are on the scene Dispatchers monitor the radio channel or channels so they are able to dispatch any additional equipment or services that may be required while personnel are responding to an incident.

Knowledge, Skills, Abilities, and Attributes

The following equipment and technology is used by Fire Equipment Dispatchers:

- A Sentinel 911 phone system
- Open Sky Radio that includes multiple radio frequencies
- Computer-Aided Dispatch System
- Emergency Medical Dispatch protocol
- A computer mapping system
- Keyboard and keypads
- Google maps
- Email
- OneCallNow paging system

Some of the most noteworthy knowledge, skills, abilities, and attributes required for successful job performance are as follows:

- Ability to perform several tasks simultaneously—listening to callers and radio transmissions, typing information into on-screen forms, talking, assessing the equipment needed, and dispatching equipment
- Ability to take control of calls
- Ability to express empathy to callers
- Ability to obtain required information from callers
- Ability to communicate clearly and efficiently on via radio and phone
- Ability to maintain composure during emergencies
- Ability to make rapid decisions according to established protocols

- Knowledge of the geography of the metropolitan area, including streets, major intersections, the city's house numbering system, freeways, borders, and landmarks

The minimum requirements for the job, as stated on a job announcement of January of 2015, are six months of experience as a fire, police or ambulance dispatcher OR two years of experience as a customer or public services professional performing duties involving consistent interaction with the public. The examination for the job measures the dimensions of listening, remembering information, and providing the best answer to questions based on the information presented. The test components also include a performance keyboarding test and a panel interview.

Changes in the Job

Several factors have changed the job of Fire Equipment Dispatcher. They are as follows:

- The introduction of new protocols requiring Dispatchers to ask questions to obtain information from callers regarding medical emergencies
- A significant increase in the number of emergency calls received
- "Shared services" – Identifying and dispatching fire and emergency medical services located in suburbs
- On-the-job training for new Dispatchers

From a job evaluation perspective, the introduction of new medical protocols and establishment of shared services appears to have increased the level of responsibility associated with the job as well as the knowledge and skill required to perform the job. The job classification of Emergency Communications Operator II (ECO II) is the Police Department's counterpart to the job of Fire Equipment Dispatcher. Just as Fire Equipment Dispatchers dispatch fire equipment and personnel, ECO II employees in the Police Department dispatch police personnel and equipment and maintain communication with police personnel during their work.

In February of this year, new classifications of Emergency Communications Operators I and II were created in the Police Department's Technical Communications Section. These new paraprofessional job classifications were established at higher pay levels to address issues of recruitment and retention.

Title	PR	Minimum	Probationary Increment	Maximum
Emergency Communications Operator I	5EN	\$40,501	\$41,918	\$46,724
Emergency Communications Operator II	5IN	\$46,347	\$47,969	\$55,825

Footnotes:

- Additional 5% for leadworker, curriculum development, classroom, or peer training duties.
- Appointment at any rate in the range based upon related emergency communications experience and credentials with the approval of Employee Relations.

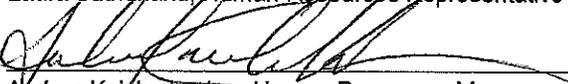
Considering the connection between the jobs of Fire Equipment Dispatcher and Emergency Communications Operator II, the fact that the Fire Department has experienced problems recruiting and retaining Fire Equipment Dispatchers, and that the level of knowledge, skill and responsibility exercised has increased for Fire Equipment Dispatcher, it is recommended that the pay level for Fire Equipment Dispatcher be increased to the same level as Emergency Communications Operator II in the Police Department.

Further, the Fire Department also expressed intent to develop a career ladder for Fire Equipment Dispatchers. This career ladder would take into consideration employee credentials and performance in determining pay rates and pay progression. The career ladder for Fire Equipment Dispatchers will be developed in tandem with a career ladder for Emergency Communications Operators in the Police Department. Recommendation reports on career ladders for

these positions in the Police and Fire Departments will come before the Fire and Police Commission and Finance and Personnel Committee for consideration and approvals.

It is therefore recommended that the job classification of Fire Equipment Dispatcher be reallocated to the same pay rates as those of the Emergency Communication Operator II in Pay Range 5IN, with the same footnotes related to leadworker and training duties, as well as recruitment flexibility.

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