



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

*Mark A. Hartwig
Fire Chief / Fire Warden*

DATE: *April 16, 2014*
CONTACT: *Ryan Beckers, Public Information Officer
(909) 794-1284*

COUNTY FIRE SALUTES TELECOMMUNICATIONS PERSONNEL

Each year the second full week in April is dedicated to those who serve as public safety dispatchers and communications personnel. With that in mind San Bernardino County Fire honors the dedicated telecommunicators who serve as the *first* first responders when the citizens of the county dial 911.

The joint powers authority known as CONFIRE (Consolidated Fire Agencies of San Bernardino County) or “Comm Center,” is the communications and dispatch hub for numerous fire agencies within San Bernardino County, including County Fire. In 2013 Comm Center handled well over 150,000 calls for service and may well match or eclipse that total again in 2014.

Also in 2013 the International Academies of Emergency Dispatch recognized Comm Center as an Accredited Center of Excellence, making them one of only two such honored dispatch centers in Southern California and one of 129 accredited worldwide.

Along with fires, rescue incidents and hazardous materials responses, a large percentage of the calls handled by Comm Center are for emergency medical services (EMS). Ranging from aid for patients with minor sprains to complex incidents such as multi-car freeway collisions, each EMS incident requires a thorough processing of a great deal of information, often from frantic callers. One of Comm Center’s key tools in dealing with EMS calls is the function known as emergency medical dispatch, or EMD. This process provides the call-taker with a set of scripted inquiries to the caller, which helps triage the call and allow for a proper set of resources to be dispatched.

While performing EMD functions Comm Center’s dispatchers routinely provide callers with a set of doctor-approved first-aid instructions, including over-the-phone CPR instructions when necessary.

Comm Center also functions as the operational area dispatch for the county, and is responsible for coordinating mutual aid needs within the county and for processing mutual aid requests to and from the Region VI Office of Emergency Services Operations Center. This function comes into play during major disasters or incidents where the efforts of all county emergency resources are required.