

ARE YOU PREPARED?



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Red River Regional Dispatch Center: Master Multi-Taskers

This quarter's emergency management spotlight is on the Red River Regional Dispatch Center (RRRDC). Some may call them the faceless heroes of emergencies. Although not physically on the scene, RRRDC communications operators are many times called the "first" first responders. They discern and relay the vital information from callers to emergency personnel in the field. Working in stations that resemble air-traffic control centers and answering over 1,000 calls per day, these communications operators are the ultimate multi-taskers.

The RRRDC was first conceived back in 2000 when area police chiefs began looking at combining the three area dispatch centers in order to enhance cost savings, provide better service for area citizens, increase safety for first responders, and in some cases eliminate competition for employees. By 2001, a Joint Powers Agreement combined the Fargo/Cass Dispatch Center with the Moorhead/Clay Dispatch Center. After nearly a year of cross-training between employees, the goal of consolidation was met. In late 2003 the RRRDC moved into their current building on NP Avenue and by 2008, the West Fargo Dispatch Center joined to make this a truly a region-wide center. The RRRDC serves as a model for others centers throughout the U.S. that are considering a similar process, especially since the center is not only between two counties-but between two states.



Thirty-five employees make up the RRRDC. There are three administrative personnel, and 32 communication operators, who in 2012, processed **393,066** telephone calls, which averages out to **1,076** calls per day. The vast majority, or about 60% of these come in on administrative lines, such as when a citizen calls an area police or fire department and gets transferred into the 911 center. The other 40% come in on the 911 lines themselves.

Being a communications operator is definitely not a Type B position. They have the unique ability to take phone calls, listen and transmit on multiple radio channels, type information into a computer database, and relay information to co-workers all at the same time. They are willing to work a high stress position, work nights, weekends, holidays and give up much of their personal lives to serve the public. They are subject to scrutiny by the agencies they serve, the public and the media. They are expected to be 100% correct 100% of the time and know that everything they say and type is recorded and most everything is subject to an open records request.

Initial communications operator training is broken into five phases and takes 21 weeks. Communications operators also do continual in-service training, on-line training, and attend conferences to keep up with an ever changing industry. RRRDC uses software which guides the communications operator through any one of 33 different types of medical emergencies.

RRRDC Director Byron Sieber describes the type of calls that the RRRDC receives, "A large number of our calls go into the category of Public Assist since they are generic questions or requests for service of varying types. Other large categories would be traffic stops and accidents. Medical calls make up 8 % of the total call volume, but that number is somewhat misleading because medical calls are much more involved than any other type of call."

One thing Sieber says not to assume about communications operators is that they know where you are when you place a call, "First and foremost, we do not always see their address come up on our screens. We need that information before anything else-should the cell phone lose connection or should the caller become incapacitated. Secondly, callers need to stay calm and let the operator guide the questioning for proper triaging of their call. And thirdly, be aware that help is many times already on the way even as the operator may continue their questioning."

To learn more about RRRDC, go to <http://www.rrrdc.com/>

Self Protection and Predator Awareness Training

The North Dakota Safety Council is offering Self Protection and Predator Awareness training; which is a practical course that focuses on the most common types of attacks, attackers, and criminal trends in North Dakota. During what could be *the most important six hours of your life*, you will gain knowledge to protect yourself in any situation.

Where:

Dakota Medical Foundation
4141 28th Avenue S. Fargo

When: Saturday, December 14
9am - 4pm

CLASSROOM TRAINING

- ND criminal trends & statistics
- Types of predators and how to recognize them
- Where most abductions occur and how to avoid them

SKILLS TRAINING

Learn how to escape your attacker if you are:

- Standing/running/walking
- On the ground
- Being attacked with a weapon

Course Cost: \$75. Group Rate: \$60 when you register 6+ people

To register, go to www.ndsc.org or call (701) 223-6372

CodeRed sign-up

To register your information, visit www.cityoffargo.com/Emergencies/JoinCodeRed/. If you are unable to sign up online call **701-476-4068**.

CodeRED includes a severe weather warning notification option. If you are already registered for **CodeRED**, please go to the website listed above to sign up for this option.

Group Safety Presentations:

Fire/Hazard Safety and Preparedness presentations are available from the Fargo Fire Department. If your business or group would like a presentation, call Ryan Viergutz, FFD at (701) 241-1522.

If you would like to be added to this newsletter email list, send your email to:

torecchia@cityoffargo.com

Time to Winterize!

Update the [emergency kits](#) in your vehicles with:

- a shovel
- windshield scraper and small broom
- flashlight
- battery powered radio
- extra batteries
- water
- snack food
- matches
- extra hats, socks and mittens
- first aid kit with pocket knife
- necessary medications
- blanket(s)
- tow chain or rope
- road salt and sand
- booster cables
- emergency flares
- fluorescent distress flag



Road Condition Information:

Dial: 511

Mobile Apps: www.dot.nd.gov/travel-info-v2/travel-info-mobile.htm

It's not too late to vaccinate – Get your flu vaccine today!

After November when you see signs that advertise: "Get Your Flu Vaccine Here," you might think, "Isn't it too late for that?" The answer is no, it's not too late!

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), flu season typically peaks in February and can last as late as May. For millions of people every season, the flu can mean a fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle aches, fatigue, and miserable days spent in bed. However, you may not realize that more than 200,000 people are hospitalized in the United States from flu complications each year.

This is why the CDC recommends an annual flu vaccine for everyone 6 months and older. It is available as a shot and as a nasal spray. Contact your healthcare provider to schedule a vaccination appointment!