

911 Dispatcher Employment Consideration Checklist

Experience has shown that many applicants for the 911 Dispatcher position consider only certain aspects of the job while ignoring less attractive features. As a result, when new employees encounter negative job features they sometimes react by leaving the job before training is completed or within a few months of certification.

While there are many satisfying, rewarding aspects of the 911 Dispatcher position and there is no question that telecommunicators make significant contributions to the welfare and safety of their fellow citizens, it is important for all applicants to carefully consider **both** the negative and positive features of a new career **before** considering the position. **This is not just a “job” but a big career commitment.**

The job factors listed below are features of the 911 Dispatcher position about which many applicants are unaware. If you are concerned about any of these items, you may discuss your concerns with Cowlitz 911 Human Resources.

This questionnaire should be considered carefully and if pertinent, discussed with your family or whomever else you feel is important.

If hired, we want you to be successful and are committed to helping you be successful. However, it is critically vital to your success that you understand the job expectations and the work environment you will be a part of. If hired, failure to comply or withstand any or all of the below defined work environment issues, may result in disciplinary action being taken against you.

Please initial every item listed which indicates you are able to comply and/or are aware of the requirement.

WORKING ENVIRONMENT

No.	Comment	Initial
1	You understand you are not just taking a job. You are giving your full commitment to giving dispatch a chance to be your long-term career.	
2	You must have regular and predictable attendance.	
3	You must be completely logged in and ready at the start of your shift (typically arrive at least 10 minutes prior to your shift.)	
4	Shifts, schedules, and vacation days are based on seniority, and at the start you will have little to no choice of shift. (Most likely you will start on overnight shift after completing training period).	
5	You also will have little to no choice about which days you work.	
6	You may be required to work any shift in a 24/7 environment, including during the training period.	
7	You may be required to work weekends on a regular basis.	
8	You will work any or all Federal, State and religious holidays on the recognized or actual date if scheduled. (i.e. Christmas, NYE, 4 th of July, etc.)	
9	You will work on personally important or special days (i.e. birthdays, anniversaries, sporting events, etc.) (Is your family aware and able to adapt?)	

No.	Comment	Initial
10	If applicable, you will need to obtain childcare between 7:00 am – 7:00 pm (days) and/or 7:00 pm – 7:00 am (nights) on a regular basis.	
11	If applicable, obtain childcare for weekends and holidays on a regular basis.	
12	If applicable, obtain childcare on short notice events on a frequent basis.	
13	You will be asked to work voluntary overtime, before or after a shift, and/or on days off, sometimes with little to no notice.	
14	You sometimes will be required to work mandatory overtime, before or after a shift, and/or on days off, sometimes with little to no notice.	
15	You must have reliable transportation that function in the 24 hr environment.	
16	You must be able to make it to work even in snowstorms, flooding, or other weather or emergency events.	
17	Dispatchers must remain seated or standing at their workstation for extended durations of time. You are permitted a 30-minute meal break per shift. Leaving the building during your break time is often restricted or prohibited. Depending on workload, unscheduled breaks (i.e., to walk around, get coffee, etc.) are generally not permitted.	
18	Dispatchers must be able to work within an organization structured on the public safety model. Specifically, must be willing to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work through a highly structured “chain of command” - Have all phone and radio activities monitored/taped - Work in accordance with a progressive disciplinary process 	
19	You must be able to work at a radio console and computer terminal for a full shift (12 hours) at minimum	
20	You must be able to work at a console with multiple computer monitors, numerous radios, and ringing telephones, while multi-tasking seamlessly and accurately between the computers, telephones, and radios.	
21	You must be willing to work in a confined room with low lighting.	
22	You must be able to work in a high stress environment.	
23	You must be willing to get along with your co-workers, including many personality types.	
24	You will receive criticism from co-workers, law enforcement officers, and/or civilians.	
25	During training period (typically 6 months – 1 year), you most likely will not be able to take any time off other than regularly scheduled days off (i.e. no vacations)	
26	The training period is a very intense, stressful period and typically people do not succeed if they have any outside life stresses.	
27	During training period, you will be learning multiple processes and memorizing a lot of information all at once. Typically, there is not time to slow down and learn one thing at a time.	
28	During training, you will be regularly reminded of errors and mistakes.	
29	During training, you will receive a daily rating of your job performance, including criticism.	
30	You must have the ability to record the information the caller is giving you into the computer in real time with nearly 100% accuracy.	
31	You must work accurately at a rapid pace over which you have little to no control.	
32	You must be able to type quickly and accurately without looking at your hands.	
33	You must maintain intense concentration for extended periods of time.	
34	Smoking is prohibited in the building and breaks are limited.	
35	You will be working in a noisy environment all day.	

No.	Comment	Initial
36	You must be willing to wear an earpiece/headphone all day.	
37	You must be able to maintain confidentiality and will prohibited from sharing details of calls with family and friends.	
38	During the pre-employment process, you will be required to submit to a criminal background check, psychological evaluation, and drug/hearing/vision screenings.	
39	During the entirety of your employment, you are expected to maintain a lifestyle free of criminal activity, including associating with anyone with criminal activity, as well as maintain a drug free lifestyle (including marijuana).	

Please initial every item listed which indicates you are aware of the types of calls you will be exposed to.

TYPES OF CALLS

No.	Comment	Initial
1	Answer telephone calls where someone screams at you.	
2	Answer telephone calls where the caller directs obscene language at you.	
3	Answer and respond to telephone calls where the caller is hysterical, intoxicated, not breathing, irrational, or confused.	
4	Answer and respond to telephone calls in which the caller is difficult to understand.	
5	Answer telephone calls from suicidal subjects or after someone has taken their own life.	
6	Answer telephone calls where you talk someone through CPR or talk to a person who has found their loved one dead	
7	Answer telephone calls from people you may know personally.	
8	Answer and respond to calls where a violent crime is in progress.	
9	Make quick decisions on which one or more person's safety is at stake.	
10	Answer medical calls where your quick action can be the difference between life and death.	
11	Prioritize calls to be dispatched, deciding which is most serious.	
12	Have all your calls monitored and recorded for evaluation.	
13	Tell someone who expects police service that their problem does not require police unit response.	
14	Remain emotionally detached in order to respond to various situations in a positive, mature, and helpful manner.	
15	Handle a heavy volume of telephone calls all day, sometimes with very little time in between calls.	

With my signature below, I state that I have **read, considered, understand** and **will comply** with each item.

I further understand that this is not a job offer or implication of an offer, but part of the application process for role of Dispatcher with Cowlitz 911 Communications Center.

Signature

Name

Date