



Statewide Public Safety Telecommunicator Certification

The goal of this effort is to “Establish a Washington State professional standard and certification based on Association of Public Safety Communications Officials (APCO) American National Standards (ANSI) for public safety telecommunicators; a standard that will ensure the basic and on-going training and skills necessary for the first first-responders to serve and protect the public and emergency first responders.”

Why do we need Statewide Professional Standards and Certification?

- The public expects a standard level of service when they call 911
- The current level of training statewide for Public Safety Telecommunicators (PSTs) is not standardized or mandated, unlike career police, fire and EMS professionals
- Continuing education and recertification will maintain skills and knowledge levels within the profession
- Public Safety publications and organizations recommend training standards for PSTs (Police Executive Research Forum, Guiding Principles On Use of Force, March, 2016; National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1221 communication standards; Presidents Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015; National 911 Program Recommended Minimum Training for Telecommunicators, 2016; National 911 Program Next Generation 911 Standards Identification and Review, 2017)
- Provides a vehicle to respond to current social justice reforms, responsiveness to the Trueblood decision and managing emerging Behavioral Health response needs
- Provides relevancy and accountability for reclassification efforts for the First, first-responders.

By the Numbers:

- 30 States have legislation requiring training for PSTs.
- 63 PSAPs in Washington State.
- 1,268 Public Safety Telecommunicators in Washington State
- 5,317,793 calls received at Washington State PSAPs in 2019.

How will the Certification and Training Programs be administered?

- The State E911 Coordinator’s Office (SECO) will manage the Certification Program
- The SECO will approve training programs in consultation with the AC and training subcommittees that meet minimum training standards
- Training programs certified as meeting the APCO International Training Program Standards will qualify for telecommunicator training program certification.

Why is the SECO the appropriate choice to oversee these programs?

- The SECO’s mission, vision, and duty require uniform delivery of statewide 911 services
- Leverages the existing relationship between the SECO and the E911 Advisory Committee comprised of a diverse public safety oriented membership.

Mission Statement:

Join together as public safety communications professionals to lead, learn, and leverage our influence, for the benefit of our profession, the public safety workforce, and ultimately the public we serve.



What is the vision of the certification program?

- Initial certification – within 12 months of employment with a primary and secondary PSAP (public safety answering point).
- Recertification – 24 hours of continuing education per year.

How will the certification program be funded?

- It is anticipated that the existing dedicated State E911 excise tax account will fund the program.

What are the elements proposed for an approved PST training program?

- Initial Training that at a minimum meets APCO standards, and corresponding task list completion (post-initial training)
- Continuing Education.

How will PSTs have access to the training necessary for certification?

- Determined by the Certification authority
- Options include: Agency in-house training program, approved training provider, on-line, and other qualified sources.

What about PSTs who are already working in Washington State?

- PSTs who are employed with a primary or secondary PSAP will be granted a waiver from initial certification but subject to continuing education requirements
- Agencies with PSTs who have obtained waivers may submit training records to meet and receive certification.

What about decertification (Revocation of Certification)?

- Certification may lapse due to failure to meet the training requirements in a timely manner
- A Telecommunicator may be decertified for serious misconduct or felony convictions similar to the rules for peace officer decertification found in RCW 43.101.105
- An appeal process will be designed collaboratively with labor, management, and regulators.

For Further Information Contact:

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