

**PSC Performance Measures
Annotations
February 2015**

9-1-1 Call Answer Time

- National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) answer time objectives (which is proposed to be the target to be measured against) are
 - 95% of 9-1-1 calls answered in 15 seconds or less;
 - 99% of 9-1-1 calls answered in 40 seconds or less.
- Answer time is impacted by availability of staff...not being tied up with other duties or phone calls. We continue to look for ways to improve on these numbers without adding the expense of more staff. For example, we will be piloting a “forced answer” process this or next month which we believe should improve on our ability to answer more quickly than ever.
- We may also be looking to shed or automate some duties that do “tie up” call-takers or potential call-takers;
 - OWI warrants
 - Call-takers on tactical radio channels for LE incidents
- Results (Q4 and January '15 shown below)...
 - '13 was 85% in 15 seconds or less;
 - January through June 26, 2014 was 90%
 - June 28 through Dec 31, 2014 was 93%

2014 (Q4): 7 seconds

2015 (January): 7 seconds

Abandoned call rate (for 9-1-1 calls)

- No nationally recognized performance measure target/objective exists for this;
- Interestingly, many calls are abandoned in the first 10 seconds of the call. This rate therefore does not track quite as closely to answer times as would be thought.
- Results:

2014 Q4:13.5% (90% occurred in less than 15 seconds)

2015 (January): 12.1% (90% occurred in less than 15 seconds)

Talk time

- No objective/target exists nationally for this;
- PSAPs attempt to balance brevity and correctness
- The more complex the call, the longer the talk time
 - Difficulty with determining location;
 - Complex protocols can increase talk time, but so can wandering and free-lancing (because a disorganized approach can actually take longer than a series of questions);
 - Text “calls” and delivery of graphics/videos will increase talk time in the near future;
 - The addition of EPD protocols in 2010 initially substantially increased talk time, but the more recent suspension of EPD did not “win back” all that talk time (our theory is that call-takers accustomed to EPD and the thorough questioning have not lost all their “muscle memory” and thus still have high-quality and longer talk time than prior to 2010
- Results (for 9-1-1 calls)
 - Q4: 2m 3 seconds
 - 2015 (January): 2m

Quality Assurance (QA) Activity and Results

- Fire and EMS QA and Quality Improvement (QI) continue to strictly follow the processes required to maintain accreditation via the International Academies of Emergency Dispatch (IAED).
- Fire and EMS call volume dictates that a statistically significant sample of calls (100) each month be reviewed. These calls are reviewed compliments of a recording system. Reviewers have access not only to the voice recording but also to the CAD screen progressions followed by the call-taker.
- QA feedback, normally in the form of a feedback form, is provided to the Supervisor and call-taker for review.
- Law enforcement (LE) related calls no longer utilize the IAED protocols, but continue to be reviewed (goal is 100 each month) using a locally produced process that mirrors the IAED process. However, the process does not assign a score for LE calls, thus the graphs do not include LE scores.

Process time measures

- Process time is addressed in the NFPA documents, but not in all aspects. That is, the process time consensus objectives are listed (see below), but the start and stop times are not clearly specified. And, the definition of which incident types (“emergency” calls) need to be measured against the objective is left up to the “Authority Having Jurisdiction – AHJ”.

- PSC has assumed the definition of the timeframe to be measured as that from call receipt to the moment that call is assigned to a responding unit.
- A recent discussion with an NFPA official suggests the Authority Having Jurisdiction...who can define what calls are “emergency calls”, can include the PSAP Director (is not limited to the Fire Chief, as was previously thought).
- Until we (I) define “emergency”, we have elected to report the process time of all Fire and EMS calls. Following the receipt of feedback from local Fire Chiefs, which I requested in a correspondence with all Dane County Fire Chiefs last week...and asking for their opinions on the definition of “emergency”, we may narrow down those calls we measure against the process time objectives that follow below.
- Objectives:
 - Fire emergency calls should be processed in 60 seconds 80% of the time
 - A 30 second “allowance” is given for more complicated calls such as HAZMAT situations, calls requiring language translation, calls requiring pre-arrival instructions, and so forth.
 - However, no allowance is given for cell phone calls that sometimes have extended processing times (caused by the difficulty in ascertaining the location of the caller/incident that the caller can’t articulate and that an “automatic location indicator” (ANI) isn’t provided for).
 - EMS calls should be processed in 90 seconds 80% of the time.
- Pre-alerting of certain calls is intended to speed the dispatch instructions to responders more quickly than the IAED protocols would do...and secondarily, improve the percentage of calls processed within the time objectives set forth by the NFPA.
 - Pre-alerting is in a pilot phase wherein we provide a dispatch recommendation to responders prior to opening the computer-aided protocol for 4 incident types; 1) structure fires, 2) outdoor fires, 3) vehicle fires, and 4) significant rescue situations. Those call-types have represented about 16% of the Fire calls. These 4 call types were chosen by PSC and an advisory group of Fire and EMS Chiefs as those most likely to be time-critical.
 - The correspondence to Fire Chiefs mentioned above (seeking the definition of “emergency”), also requested the Chiefs’ feedback on whether they want all or more or no calls pre-alerted. We’ll use that feedback along with advice from the extant pre-alerting work group to determine next steps coming out of this multi-month pilot phase.
- Automation of the dispatch recommendation and subsequent paging of responders has not yet been done (should be done later this quarter), however, it is believed that no more than about 19 seconds will be saved with automation.

- **Results:**
 - **Given that only 16% of calls are currently pre-alerted (because those are arguably the critical ones), any process time improvement for those does not “move the dial” much if the performance measure uses all Fire calls (as we currently do). If objective-meeting is the prime mover, then we either have to improve process time on many more calls (pre-alert other, likely less time-critical, call types) or include fewer call types in the data when viewing process times vis a vis the NFPA objectives. The definition of “emergency”, if including just the pre-alerted call types, for example, would “move the dial”.**
 - **The following results could be dramatically different if/when we change our pre-alert procedures and/or redefine “emergency”.**
 - **However, given that pre-alerting has saved, on average, about 50 seconds of process time and that new process time still doesn’t typically average sub-60 seconds, meeting the NFPA objective will remain elusive.**
 - **NOTE: 9-1-1 Professional Associations (NENA and APCO) have a seat at the NFPA committee table developing the objectives. Their efforts to provide an “allowance” for address/location determination and/or to provide a more “scientific” approach to the objective, have largely been frustrated.**

2014 (Q4): Pre-alerts: ~65% < 90 seconds; ~30% < 60 seconds

2015 (January): Almost exactly the same.