

BURLINGTON COMMUNICATIONS CENTER ANNUAL REVIEW



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POSITION: Accreditation Specialist



OVERVIEW OF THE YEAR

The Burlington Communications Center (BCC) onboarded the Graham Police Department and Fire Department's on December 31, 2020. The BCC took over the dispatching of non-emergency and emergency calls for service for Graham Police and Graham Fire Departments and incoming 911 and administrative phone calls for the City of Graham's Police and Fire Departments.

In March 2021, the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies reviewed the Burlington Communications Center for compliance with the Public Safety Communications (PSC) Accreditation Program. The BCC was accredited with standard conditions in place. After the Initial On-Site and CALEA Committee Review, it was identified that additional resources would be needed to meet the intent of the standards of Public Safety Communications (PSC). In January 2021, the agency re-classified the Law Enforcement Accreditation Manager (AM) position to the Accreditation Policy/Planning Director position. The PSC Accreditation Program was transferred from the Community Relations Captain to the Accreditation Policy/Planning Director. At this time, the Accreditation Policy/Planning Director had a one-part-time position allocated for law enforcement accreditation assistance. In 2021, in addition to the initiatives above, the agency allocated two part-time positions to start at the new budget cycle. In July 2021, one part-time position was filled. This position with filled with a retired Chief of Police with extensive accreditation experience and policy development experience to assist in achieving the recommendations in this report and other accreditation/policy matters. The remaining part-time position remains vacant, and there are plans to fill this position in 2022.

In 2021, as part of the PSC Accreditation Program, the majority of the Burlington Communications Center's written directives were closely reviewed and revised to meet PSC standards and other state-mandated requirements. The administrative reporting process was restructured to include monthly and quarterly reports. Additionally, forms were created for documented reporting. As for the annual reporting, in 2021, it was closely reviewed, and due to having a year of data and findings and extensive change to policy and procedures, it was decided to have specific annual reporting documents. This BCC Annual Review does not include specific information compared to last year's annual report as it was moved to the following new reporting documents: Recruitment Plan, Recruitment Analysis, Risk Management, Community Involvement, and a Liability Analysis. We are hopeful that the implemented strategies in 2021 will provide a structure to continue to use Public Safety Communications as our benchmark that will help us deliver best-practice services to our staff and community.

In 2021, a Workload Analysis was completed (*see Staffing Section of this report*), and a six-month follow-up Analysis will be completed in July 2022.

RECAP OF LAST YEARS RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations involving the Burlington Communications Center can be found in the 2020 BCC Annual Review prepared by Manager Stephanie Chatman, which consisted of six (6) recommendations listed below.

1. Conduct an analysis of total dispatched emergency/non-emergency and medical/EMS calls for the Graham Police and Fire Departments to determine if additional Telecommunicators are need. This analysis will also include cost-sharing for employee expenses related to QA and management functions per the contract. **Completed.** *A Workforce Analysis was conducted and is in the PSC Assessment Standard 1.3.2. For further information, see the Staffing Section of this report.*
2. Establish and maintain an on-call schedule for telecommunicators to ensure coverage for unanticipated emergencies. **Completed.** *The current on-call schedule is being utilized to handle COVID absences and other emergency-related staffing needs.*
3. Establish a Community Liaison for 911 education. **Completed.** *Further information is available in the new Community Involvement Annual Report.*
4. BCC Manager to hold quarterly meetings with the TC Leads, and Bi-annual meetings with all BCC staff members. This was not completed due to COVID. *This recommendation will continue to stay and be modified to have virtual meetings if staff cannot meet in person. Attendance and minutes will be tracked for those staff who are unable to attend.*
5. Conduct more in-house training to include evacuation preparedness, TTY, and the Emergency Operations Plan review. This training will also include overall CALEA content with added focus on the justification and operational procedures for reporting liability issues. This new requirement is important and will be covered regularly in training as it becomes part of the organizational culture of the BCC. **Completed.** *The BCC Manager Stephanie Chatman conducted evacuation and TTY training twice in 2021, see the Training section of this report for further information. Liability information is available in the new Liability Annual Analysis.*
6. Review all PSC standards for written directives, create a plan for additional Standard Operating Procedures to be created, and collaborate with the law enforcement accreditation program for continued PSC accreditation standards to stay referenced in the agency policy manual. **Complete.** *The majority of the Burlington Communications Center policies were revised, approved by the Chief of Police, and a new manual was published.*
7. Interoperability Radio Communications Testing- Schedule annual test for the year 2021. **Completed.** *See further information in the Interoperability Section of this report.*
8. Emergency Operations Plan:
 - Continue collaboration between the City of Burlington and Guilford County Emergency Management (EM) to work towards a more comprehensive relative and up-to-date plan. **Complete.** *Meetings were held with Guilford EM, Chief of Police and Director of Accreditation Policy/Planning, policies, and CALEA standards were reviewed. For further information, see the Emergency Operations Plan Section of this report.*
 - To create a BCC specific and detailed Emergency Operations Plan to stand apart from the LE policy 03-20. It will include the safety and security of staff, continuity of operation, and all the 20 requirements listed in the PSC standard. BCC will be coordinating with Guilford Emergency Management in 2021 to facilitate this need. **Completed.** *The policy 3.03*

Emergency Operations Plan was created. See the Emergency Operations Plan section of this report.

I. BCC PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENTS REPORT DATA-2021

During the calendar year 2021, both the Quality Assurance Program, and the Performance Measurement Program were further enhanced. Both programs were developed with further guidance following the Burlington Communications Centers issuance of written directive 2.01 – *Quality Assurance and Performance Measurements*. The publication of this new written directive bifurcated the reporting process with slightly different data collection and methods occurring during the first half of the year than the second half. Moving forward, data collection and analysis will be much more uniform and actionable.

The revamping of the Quality Assurance Program and the Performance Measurement Program reporting methods can be noted as a success for the Communications Center.

Quality Assurance Program:

A designated Quality Assurance reviewer conducted assessments of each Telecommunicator using established performance dimensions for each classification applicable to the employee's position. These Quality Assurance checks were reviewed through the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) software as well as using the Eventide Recording System (ETRS).

Quality Assurance checks were conducted for each Telecommunicator (with approved exceptions) to determine minimum performance expectations were/are occurring and included a total of two (2) reviews monthly from the following activities:

- 1 - Telephone Protocol/Skills
- 2 - Dispatch Performance (Radio)
- 3 - Dispatch Performance (CAD Entry)

The following grading parameters were used to assess individual categories and overall performance.

- 1 - 91% - 100% Exceeds Expectations
- 2 - 80% - 90% Meets Expectations
- 3 - 71% - 79% Does Not Meet Expectations
- 4 - 79% or Below - Verbal Counseling with Guardian Tracking documentation

Given that the data collection process was slightly different for the first two quarters then the second two quarters, the results will be reported here in two sections. The following are the annual results for the 2021 Quality Assurance Program:

First Two Quarters of 2021:

A total of one hundred twenty-four (124) Quality Assurance checks were completed. These QA checks took an average of all three activities which resulted in one hundred twenty-three (123) checks meeting the required benchmark (80%). One (1) Quality Assurance check obtained an average of 77.3%. The employee who fell below the approved benchmark received coaching which was documented in Guardian Tracking the department performance software.

Second Two Quarters of 2021:

A total of six hundred sixty-six (666) Quality Assurance checks were completed. Unlike the first two quarters of 2021, these checks did not calculate only an average of all three activities, but rather, the activities were evaluated individually and increased to six (6) quality reviews per Telecommunicator. This change in methodology provided much more accurate data for analysis and may help identify a specific area that is in need improvement action.

A total of six hundred thirty-five (635) Quality Assurance reviews met the benchmark of 80% or above with thirty-one (31) falling below the benchmark. The more definitive data collection and analysis further identified these deficient performance areas (below 80%) which were as follows:

- 1 – Call Entry – Three (3) Quality Assurance Checks below 80%
- 2 – CAD Entry – Fifteen (15) Quality Assurance Checks below 80%
- 3 – Call Taking – Eight (8) Quality Assurance Checks below 80%
- 4 – Dispatch – Five (5) Quality Assurance Checks below 80%

Each month employees are notified through the Guarding Tracking performance software the outcome of their Quality Assurance checks and whether they met the written directive goals or not. During this review there may have been deficiencies in documenting the number of counseling sessions and subsequent Guarding Tracking entries. Recommendations were made at the end of this report.

Performance Measurement Program

Monthly performance measurements of the BCC's overall performance as a Division were conducted. Data was collected through the Emergency Call Tracking System (ECATS) to complete the overall performance measurement. Outcomes from the collected data was measured against departmental goals and/or goals set by the PSAP 911 call operating procedures listed in the North Carolina Administrative Code 09 NCAC 06C.0209. The following activities and outcomes of BCC operations were accomplished:

- 1- Emergency Line Processing
- 2 - Abandoned Emergency Lines
- 3 - Call Processing Times (Priority Calls)

During 2021, a total of 30,915 emergency line calls were processed. The goal set was to answer 90% of the incoming emergency lines in ten (10) seconds or less. Data recorded reflected that the BCC exceeded this goal by answering these emergency line calls in less than ten seconds or less 97% of the time.

During 2021, there were a total of two hundred seventy-two (272) abandoned emergency line calls. It should be noted that in the month of September, there were test calls from ESINET (Emergency Services IP Network) which could not be filtered out for this analysis. The goal for the abandoned emergency line calls is to have no more than 1% of all incoming emergency calls abandoned (an abandoned call is where the caller has hung up before a Telecommunicator can answer it). Even with the ESINET test calls occurring, the 1% or less goal was met with the abandoned call processing averaging .7%.

During 2021, there were a total of one hundred sixty-six (166) priority calls processed. The published goal is to complete this function in sixty (60) seconds or less, from the time entered to time ready for dispatch. The BCC exceeded this goal by processing the priority calls in 34 seconds on average with a minimum processing time of sixteen (16) seconds and a maximum processing time of fifty-nine (59) seconds.

II. TECHNOLOGY/EQUIPMENT/TESTING -2021

Technology

As of August 31, 2021, the Burlington Police Department Communications Center joined the Emergency Services IP Network (ESINET). This was a requirement to be able to move towards taking NextGen 911 calls/videos/data, etc. Communication has occurred to move forward pertaining to, training and policy development involving NextGen 911 prior to full implantation.

Interoperable Radio Communications Testing

On September 17, 2021, an Interoperability Test was administered and completed by TC II Jared Buckner with the collaboration of the Battalion Chief with the Burlington Fire Department.

This test was accomplished using the BCC procedures for patching through to the Alamance County Emergency Management (AC EM) channel. The patching procedures for BCC are as follows:

- Console turned on, and the Alamance County Emergency Management (AC EM) channel was selected
- Selecting the Patch 1 option on the radio screen, PD VIPER channel was selected from the Mutual Aid tab and patched to the BURCOMM channel on the main BUR Dispatch tab.
- Once these two channels were selected, the patch was confirmed when the patch icon with the lightning bolt was pressed, confirming the patch was successful with both the BURCOMM and PD VIPER channels showing a lightning bolt beside them.

TC Lead Jared Buckner contacted Alamance County Communications Center (ACCC), Chris Saul via this patch, which shown successfully displayed a lightning bolt beside the BURCOMM channel and a volume icon beside the PD VIPER channel indicating that the transmission was sent. Chris Saul from ACCC responded, the icons reversed, showing the lightning bolt beside the PD VIPER and the volume icon beside the BURCOMM channel.

The interoperability test was successful and will be completed annually

III. EMERGENCY OPERATIONS-2021

The BCC 2020 Annual Review covered the interlocal agreement with Guilford County to provide long-term regional emergency management services to the City of Burlington under a three-year contract for on-call coordination and program review for the City of Burlington. In 2020 and Quarters 1, 2, and 3 of 2021, the City of Burlington Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) was reviewed by GCEM staff.

In 2021, the BCC operated under the BPD Law Enforcement policy *03-20 Critical Incident* for critical incident command and supplemented by the COB CEMP, which has a specific section specifying Burlington Communications Center. In 2021, new police law enforcement policies were reviewed by GCEM to include a Police, EOP, Response to Bomb Threat, and Hazardous Material Response. In September 2021, it was identified that the BCC needed specific guidelines for a Communications EOP, and the COB and PD Emergency Plans would supplement those guidelines.

In October of 2021, GCEM hired a full-time employee to function as the Emergency Management Coordinator for the City of Burlington. Two of the EM's position initial priorities were the City's Emergency Operations Plan (formerly the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan) and the Continuity of Operations Plan.

In December of 2021, the EM Coordinator met with the Police Command staff, shared his progress, and initiated items in 2022. New policies were re-written for the Burlington Communications Center, including 3.03 - *Emergency Operations Plan* (EOP) and 4.03 - *Radio Systems*. These policies are intended to establish procedures that are consistent with the Department's overall Emergency Operations Plan. However, the focus of this plan is to address issues directly impacting the overall operations and planning needs of the Communications Center. The EOP and Radio Systems policy were reviewed by the Captain and the BCC Manager for verification of available resources. These policies were shared with the EM and will be beneficial as the EM continues work with the COB Emergency Operations Plan and moves towards an Integrated Preparedness Plan.

IV. STAFFING AND TRAINING -2021

Staffing- A workload Analysis was completed in 2021. Forecasting for Administrative Calls for service were analyzed and due to the addition of Graham City on 12-30-2020, the forecast of calls could potentially change in 2022, but there was an 11.5% increase in January and February at the time of the analysis. The same for forecasting BCC 911 Calls for Service (CFS); there was an 11.2% increase compared to the 2020 911 CFS. An Analysis was complete for the hour of day and day of the week to see the impact on staffing. The Findings demonstrated that with the 11% increase (indicated by the first two months with the new service area) continues, the anticipated need for staff to cover would be one more TC, and current staffing levels are maintained.

Two employees were hired in 2021 to fill vacancies. One position was identified through the Workload Analysis to add personnel due to the increase in workload was approved and will be hired in the budget year 2022-2023.

Training - Training records documented in the individual training records located in the Central Square Records Management System (RMS) reflect that during the calendar year, staff assigned to the Communications Section received a collective total of 1403.5 hours of training during the calendar year 2021. Greater attention may be needed in one or more areas in documenting this training time. It was observed that more than one employee had completed training that was not recorded in the training module.

No remedial training was conducted in 2021.

**PSC Training Statistical Chart*

	#
Hired	2
Released from Probation	3
Completed Training	1
All Employees Retained for Three Years or More	13
Average In-service Training Hours	18

V. PERSONNEL ACTIONS -2021

There was one Communications employee that had a letter of counseling, this was due to decision making. There were no other personnel actions, to include; no letters of reprimand, administrative leaves, or referrals to Employee Assistance Program.

**PSC Personnel Action Statistical Chart*

Actions	#
Suspensions	0
Demotions	0
Resignations in Lieu of Termination	0
Terminations	0
Other	1

VI. FISCAL COMPONENT (Personnel, Training, Equipment, Facilities) 2021

The budget allocation for the Police Communications Division, 51-519 started the 2021 fiscal year (July 1, 2021) with an original appropriation of \$2,122,643. A transfer/adjustment (increase) was made to line item 44500 "Maintenance and Service Contracts" in the amount of \$115,700. This brought the fiscal the revised budget for the Communications Center to \$2,228,343.

As of January 14, 2022, the available budget amount posted for the Communications Division 51-519 was 1,150,748.12, which reflected that 48.4% of the budget has been expended.

The following line items, with approximately six (6) months remaining in the fiscal budget year, are reflecting greater than 65% of the allocation already being used. It is recommended that fiscal attention should be given to line item 51-519-40300 (Overtime) which has utilized 86% (\$71,454.04) of the budgeted amount of \$83,068.00.

Police - Communications 51-519							
Line	Title	Original Appropriation	Transfer Adjustment	Revised Budget	YTD Expenditure	Available Budget	Percent Used
40300	Overtime	83,068	0	83,068	71,454	11,613	86.0%
43390	Equip/Const	0	0	0	8,630	-8,630	100%
44500	Maint/Svc Contracts	304,719	115,700	420,419	274,719	145,699	65.3%
43300	Dept. Supplies	5,000	0	5,000	3861	1,168	76.6%

REPORT FINDINGS -2021

- The revamping of the Quality Assurance Program and the Performance Measurement Program through policy development, form development, training, coaching, and counseling has resulted in improved data collection. The data collected is greater in both volume and specificity, which results in better improvement plans.
- The Burlington Communications Center collectively, as a team, are exceeding the published benchmarks for performance which is a commendable accomplishment as it most directly results in both community, fire staff and officer safety.
- The majority of the written directives unique to the Burlington Communications Center were either revamped or newly generated. This has resulted in updated guidance for the staff and resulted in improved compliance with CALEA's PSC standards.
- An Emergency Operations Plan/Policy was developed for the Burlington Communications Center which meets, or exceeds the requirements published in CALEA's PSC standards.
- The interoperability radio communications function was confirmed to be operational in the event such a function is needed on both small- and large-scale public safety operations/incident/events.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS For 2022

- Coordinate with the Training Division to ensure that all training conducted is properly recorded in the Records Management System. A random periodic check of the RMS training entries should be done on the CALEA PSC time sensitive training standards by the Communications Manager to ensure accurate documentation is occurring throughout the system/process.
- A review should be conducted on the factors driving overtime costs to determine if a request should be made for an increased appropriation in the overtime line item (40300) for the Communications Center.
- Continued coaching, counseling and training should occur regularly throughout the year to help ensure there is a sound understanding of Risk Management reporting and the Quality Assurance Program to specifically include when to make Guarding Tracking entries when deficiencies are identified.
- A tracking system should be developed to assist in documenting and identifying training that occurs in different categories such as initial training, in-service, supervisory, CALEA PSC mandated, and any other category deemed beneficial.

- The BCC Manager will hold quarterly meetings with the Telecommunicator Leads, and Bi-annual meetings with all BCC staff members. If needed, these meetings can be modified to have virtual meetings, or a hybrid, if all staff cannot meet in person. A tracking system should be developed to document attendance, as well as the meeting minutes.
- Hire one (1) Telecommunicator to fill the position that was identified in the Workload Analysis (budget year 2022-2023).